

The Function of the Speeches in the Acts of the Apostles

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The Function of the Speeches in the Acts of the Apostles

*A Key to Interpretation of Luke's Use of Speeches
in Acts*

By

Janusz Kucicki



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Preface

Inspiration comes, more often than not, in the routine of everyday life without our expecting it. The sequence of events leading to this book began with a casual question put to a student concerning an essay. The student expressed the opinion that it was difficult, if not even impossible, to establish any meaningful historical account of the primitive Christian movement on the basis of the Acts of the Apostles, “because Luke included too many long speeches that interrupt the account, and distract the reader from the story.” Unguardedly, I offered the simple suggestion that the “story” might be read without the “distract” of the speeches. I do not know if the student followed my advice, but for my own part it was the spur that drove me to read Acts myself from a new perspective. The suggestion made to the student has resulted in Chapter 1 of this book, which contains only the narrative portion of Acts. My interest then turned to what I had “deleted” from the story, the speeches, because without the narrative context in which they are found they seemed to lose their meaning. It became clear that the narrative and the speeches are mutually interdependent. The speeches have a particular function within the narrative, and from the narrative we are alerted to the purpose of the various speeches. The task of unravelling the two layers while maintaining their close-knit unity is tedious, but it leads to a greater understanding and more accurate appreciation of what is surely a literary masterpiece created by Luke.

The journey from the first spark of a random idea to developing it into a full study covering all of Acts has been a long one, frequently interrupted by other commitments. That it has finally reached this stage is due in great part to the invaluable help of many irreplaceable friends, to whom I am very greatly and gratefully indebted.

First of all, my thanks are due to Nanzan Catholic University (Nagoya, Japan), which provided the necessary material support for my study, and especially for the financial assistance given for a period of research (2013.02–03) at the École Biblique in Jerusalem. My sincere thanks goes also to the staff of the École Biblique for their friendship and the hospitality given to me during the time I spent there.

Among those to whom I owe special gratitude the first is Walter Dunphy. With his long experience as professor and scholar he has been my main mentor during work on this book. His advice, suggestions and supervision of the English text, greatly influenced the shape that the initial idea has finally taken. I would also like to express my gratitude to Brendan Kelleher for his contribution in checking the English of the text and alerting me to nuances of the

language not readily noted by somebody who is not a native-speaker. Due to circumstances I was forced to continue my academic work while preparing the manuscript for publication. Jakub Rajčáni, with his technical skills and attention to accuracy, offered invaluable assistance in this.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all those friends and conferees who supported me in many different ways during the whole process of writing, and especially in times when the whole project was in danger of floundering. First of all I would like to thank Jozef Chovanec with his wife Henrietta and new-born daughter Lucia for being truly friends in deed. Next I would like to mention in particular M. Calmano, A. Fausone, R. Strzyżewski, G. Ziebura, P. Sudnik and his family, M. Hirabaru, R. Okuya. Without doubt, there are very many more who should also be mentioned. Last, but by no means least, my thanks go to my mother Wiesława Kucicka.

List of Abbreviations

1 The Bible

The Old Testament

Amos	Amos	1–2 Kings	1–2 Kings
Ba	Baruch	Lam	Lamentations
1–2 Chron	1–2 Chronicles	Lev	Leviticus
Dan	Daniel	1–2 Macc	1–2 Maccabees
Deut	Deuteronomy	Mal	Malachi
Esther	Esther	Mic	Micah
Ex	Exodus	Nahum	Nahum
Ezek	Ezekiel	Neh	Nehemiah
Ezra	Ezra	Num	Numbers
Gen	Genesis	Obad	Obadiah
Hab	Habakkuk	Prov	Proverbs
Hag	Haggai	Ps	Psalms
Hos	Hosea	Qoh	Qoheleth
Is	Isaiah	Ruth	Ruth
Jer	Jeremiah	1–2 Sam	1–2 Samuel
Job	Job	Song	Song of Songs
Joel	Joel	Tob	Tobit
Jon	Jonah	Wis	Wisdom
Josh	Joshua	Zech	Zechariah
Jud	Judith	Zeph	Zephaniah
Judg	Judges		

The New Testament

Ac	Acts	Mk	Mark
Col	Colossians	Mt	Matthew
1–2 Cor	1–2 Corinthians	1–2 Pet	1–2 Peter
Eph	Ephesians	Phil	Philippians
Gal	Galatians	Philem	Philemon
Heb	Hebrews	Rev	Revelation
Jam	James	Rom	Romans
Jn	John	1–2 Thess	1–2 Thessalonians
1–2–3 Jn	1–2–3 John	1–2 Tim	1–2 Timothy
Jude	Jude	Tit	Titus
Lk	Luke		

2 Dictionaries, Commentaries, Series, Journals

AB	Anchor Bible
BA	Biblical Archaeologist
ABD	The Anchor Bible Dictionary
ACr	Analecta Cracoviensia
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ASNU	Acta Seminarii Neotestamentici Upsaliensis
ATHANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
BDB	The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon
Bib	Biblica
BKUL	Biblioteka KUL
BibR	Biblical Research
BibTh	Biblical Theology
BSac	Bibliotheca Sacra
BU	Biblische Untersuchungen
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
ConcTr	Concilium Tridentinum
CT	Collectanea Theologica
DB	Dictionary of the Bible
DDD	Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible
DNTB	Dictionary of New Testament Background
DPL	Dictionary of Paul and his Letters
EBC	Expositor's Bible Commentary
EtB	Etudes Bibliques
EDNT	Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament
EDSS	Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls
EJ	Encyclopedia Judaica
EKK	Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
EstB	Estudios Biblicos
ETL	Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses
EvQ	The Evangelical Quarterly
EWNT	Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament
ExT	The Expository Times
GELS	A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuaginta
HBD	Harper's Bible Dictionary
HTR	The Harvard Theological Review
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IDB	Interpreter's Dictionary of Bible
InThSt	Indian Theological Studies

JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JQR	The Jewish Quarterly Review
JSJ	Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Periods
JSNT	Journal for the Study of the New Testament
JSNTSS	Journal for the Study of the New Testament. Supplement Series
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies
JTS	Journal of the Theological Studies
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LEH	A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuaginta
Liddell-Scott	A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament
LPSt	Library of Pauline Studies
MC	Mount Carmel
MoffatNTC	The Moffat New Testament Commentary I–XVII
NBibD	New Bible Dictionary
NedThT	Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift
NICNT	The New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIVAC	NIV Application Commentary
NIGTC	The New International Greek Testament Commentary
NovT	Novum Testamentum
NTA	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
NTS	New Testament Studies
PFES	Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society
Pr	Pravnik
PRSt	Perspectives in Religious Studies
RB	Revue Biblique
RHPR	Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses
RoBl	Rivista Biblica
RQ	Revue de Qumran
RScRel	Recherches des science religieuse
SANT	Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature. Monograph Series
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature. Dissertation Series
SBT	Studies of Biblical Theology
SCM	Student Christian Movement
SEA	Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok
SEv	Studia Evangelica
SHBC	Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary
SJT	Scottish Journal of Theology
SNTS	Society for New Testament Studies

ST	Studia Theologica
StEv	Studia Evangelica
StThSt	Stellenbosch Theological Studies
STV	Studia Theologica Varsaviensia
SUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
SWJT	Southwestern Journal of Theology
TCGNT	A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
THNT	Theology of the New Testament
ThSt	Theologische Studien
ThZ	Theologische Zeitschrift
TynBul	Tyndale Bulletin
TZTh	Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie
VT	Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche
ZSTh	Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie
ZThK	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche
ZWTh	Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie

3 Classical Writings

Ant.	<i>Antiquitates Iudaicae</i> , Flavius Josephus
Bell.	<i>De bello Iudaico</i> , Flavius Josephus

Introduction

1 The Acts of the Apostles and the Speeches

The Acts of the Apostles is the second part of a two-volume work by Luke, addressed specifically to Theophilus. In his Gospel, Luke followed in the footsteps of those who had attempted before him to write the account of the life of Jesus. Studies of the Synoptic Gospels have shown that Luke relied extensively on the written sources available to him. But the Gospel of Luke also contains material that indicates his own contribution to the narrative in theological and social questions. Luke took a further step beyond the other authors of the Synoptic Gospels by writing an account of the history of the first generation of the Christian communities. This was unique at his time, and it remains unique, since there is no similar writing in the New Testament to which the work of Luke can be compared. This unique character of Acts did not attract the kind of special attention that one might suppose. On the contrary, the writing remained relatively unknown among the earliest Christians.¹ In modern times, the unique character of Acts is the source of on-going discussion concerning the genre of the writing and its historical reliability.² The controversy concerning the Acts of the Apostles resulted in numerous commentaries and monographs, which, due to differences in approach and method, resulted in widely differing studies.³ Not surprisingly, when we consider that the speeches in the book form a third of the total text of Acts, much attention was given to the speeches. Not only the number, but also the variety, content and forms of the

1 Bruce argues that the importance of Acts is related to the problem of the Marcion's canon. F.F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: The Paternoster Press, 1988), 3–5.

2 Concerning the discussion about the genre of Acts, see B. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids—Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1998), 2–39. Some scholars accept the Acts of the Apostles as being a historical monograph: e.g. E. Plümacher, “Die Apostelgeschichte als historische Monographie,” in *Les Actes des Apôtres: Traditions, rédaction, théologie*, ed. J. Kremer (Leuven: Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense, 1977), 457–466; D. Palmer, “Acts and the Ancient Historical Monograph,” in *The Book of Acts in its Ancient Literary Setting*, vol. 1, ed. B. Winter and A. Clarke, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 1–30.

3 Probably the best way to grasp the richness of the interpretation of the Acts would be to glance through Keener's long *Prolegomenon* (pp. 3–115) in Volume 1 of his monumental commentary on Acts, giving special attention to the wealth of information given in the footnotes. See G.S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 3–115.

speeches became one of the major issues in discussion about the historicity and genre of the Acts of the Apostles. The speeches, regardless of whether they are an exact reproduction of the original speeches or are Luke's own composition, are always seen as the integral part of the book. The unity of the narrative section of Acts and the speeches section of the book was not the subject of any controversy or in-depth study until the second half of the twentieth century. The first step in this direction was taken by Soards, who analysed almost all the speeches in the narrative section of Acts.⁴ His work was supplemented by Padilla, who was the first to give due attention to the speeches of the outsiders.⁵ Without doubt, the speeches are designed as being an integral part of the narrative in Acts, however this does not necessarily mean that they were written simultaneously with the narrative.⁶ If this be the case, the historicity of the narrative section and the historicity of the speech section become different issues.⁷ Failure to take this distinction into account resulted in the speeches, and in particular the problem of their historicity, being used as arguments against the overall historicity of Acts.

2 A Brief Outline of the Controversy Concerning the Speeches in Acts

Ever since the first written comments on the Acts of the Apostles it was believed that that all speeches in Acts are the original words of the speakers and this axiomatic statement determined interpretations of the speeches until the nineteenth century.⁸ This axiom was challenged by Eichhorn, who observed that although the speeches in the Acts are given by different persons, they have many common elements that suggest that they are the work of the same author.⁹ The importance of the observation was recognised, and many scholars attempted to offer an explanation for the phenomenon. In 1826, W. de Wette suggested that the written sources, on which Acts was based, were used in a

4 M.L. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts: Their Content, Context, and Concerns* (Louisville: Westminster, 1994).

5 O. Padilla, *The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts: Poetic, Theology, and Historiography*, SNTS 144, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

6 Here we refer to the possibility that after completing the narrative section of Acts, Luke supplemented it by including the speeches section written according to needs of particular parts of the narrative section.

7 Here, we refer to the different functions of the narrative and the speeches.

8 Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*, 1–2.

9 J.G. Eichhorn, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1810), 38.

free manner by Luke.¹⁰ The thesis retains the balance between Luke's contribution to the speeches as the editor of Acts and the traditional approach, which attributed the speeches to the original speakers. However, in 1870, Overbeck, while reworking de Wette's commentary, opposed the contention that written sources formed the basis for the speeches.¹¹ In Overbeck's opinion the speeches are the Luke's own creation. The most radical step, both concerning Acts directly, and also the speeches indirectly, was taken by Baur who, on the basis of "*Tendenzkritik*" claimed that Acts was written in the second century and was a document of little historical value.¹² The major proponent of Baur's thesis was Zeller, who rejected the historicity of Acts and authenticity of the speeches.¹³ The statement of Baur was opposed by Schneckenburger, who accepted historicity of Acts.¹⁴ Because Baur in his theory accented the conflict between Peter (representing Jewish Christians) and Paul (representing Gentile Christians), Schneckenburger pointed to the parallelisms between Peter and Paul in Luke's presentation of both apostles.¹⁵ Similarities between the speeches of Paul (at Pisidian Antioch), Peter (the Pentecost speech) and Stephen led Schneckenburger to conclude that the speeches are Luke's composition, whose purpose was to present a general example of early Christian teaching concerning Jesus as the Messiah for Jews and Gentiles. The most radical statement was made by Jülicher, who wrote that many of the speeches in Acts are "free inventions by the author".¹⁶ Even those who defended the historical value of Acts accepted that some speeches are Luke's composition.¹⁷ This first phase of a critical approach to the speeches was dominated by German scholars whose main concern was the historicity of the speeches as the part of the historicity of Acts.

10 W.M.L. de Wette, *Lehrbuch der historisch-kritischen Einleitung in die kanonischen Bücher des Neuen Testaments* (Berlin: Reimer, 1860), 250.

11 F. Overbeck, "Kurze Erklärung der Apostelgeschichte," in *Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Neuen Testament*, ed. W.M.L. de Wette, 1/4 (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1870), VII–LXXI.

12 F.Chr. Baur, "Die Christenpartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde, der Gegensatz des petrinischen und paulinischen Christentums in der ältesten Kirche, der Apostel Petrus in Rom," *TZTh* 4 (1831): 61–206.

13 E. Zeller, *Die Apostelgeschichte nach ihrem Inhalt und Ursprung kritisch untersucht* (Stuttgart: C. Macken, 1854), 250–275.

14 M. Schneckenburger, *Über den Zweck der Apostelgeschichte* (Bern: Chr. Fischer 1841).

15 Luke presents Peter and Paul as the true Jews.

16 A. Jülicher, "Einleitung in das Neue Testament," in *Grundriss der Theologischen Wissenschaften*, 3/1 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1913), 404–405.

17 E. Meyer, *Die Apostelgeschichte und die Anfänge des Christentums*, vol. 3 of *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums* (Stuttgart—Berlin: Cotta, 1923), 139.

A significant shift in the approach to the speeches was made by H.J. Cadbury, who introduced a literary approach to the study of the speeches.¹⁸ He observed that the ancient historians often invented speeches. It allowed him to compare the speeches of Acts to the speeches of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Josephus, Dio Cassius and Tacitus. He thinks that Luke created the speeches, which in his opinion is attested by features such as: extensive quotation from the Old Testament serving as proof of the messianic dignity of Jesus; connection and relation between speeches (e.g. Ac 14,15–17 and Ac 17,22–31); literary similarities between speeches given by different speakers. Although it is possible that Luke may have had some sources at his disposal, the extent of Luke's intervention would justify the conclusion that the speeches are Luke's composition.

Arguing against Cadbury, Bruce thinks that Luke did not invent the speeches, but what he included in Acts is his own account of the original speaker's speech.¹⁹ According to Bruce, it was normal for all ancient historians to create the speeches. They were obliged to give an account, or at least a summary of the speakers' speech. Some were more rhetorical in their approach and others were more documentary. Bruce places Luke among the more documentary historians. As arguments he offers analyses of several speeches, which were divided into four groups: evangelistic speeches, deliberative speeches, apologetic speeches and hortatory speeches. According to Bruce, some speeches (for example, the speech at Miletus) leave no doubt as to the fact that "Luke heard it himself".

Significant progress in the study of the speeches was made by Dibelius in a short but very important essay.²⁰ His basic point of departure was that ancient historians did not feel obliged to present a record of the speech, but they used the speech as a device to indicate the importance of something, which they have chosen to underline in particular. It could be an indication of the historical event, or an explanation of the situation and circumstances, or a presentation of the speaker's character. The speeches have a function that differs from being a simple record of the actual speech. Based on this, Dibelius analysed those speeches in Acts that do not fit well into the context of the narrative. The result of the analysis shows that the speeches take complementary and explan-

18 H.J. Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts* (New York: Macmillan, 1927); Id., "The Speeches in Acts," in *The Acts of the Apostles. Additional Notes to the Commentary*, part 1 of *The Beginnings of Christianity*, ed. F.J. Foakes Jackson and K. Lake, vol. 5 (London: Macmillan, 1933); Id., *The Book of Acts in History* (London: Macmillan, 1955).

19 F.F. Bruce, *The Speeches in Acts* (London: Tyndale Press, 1944), 6.

20 M. Dibelius, "The Speeches in Acts and Ancient Historiography," in *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. H. Greewen (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), 138–145.

atory function in the narrative. They serve not only to the narrative structure, but they also serve the readers. For this reason Dibelius counted Luke among the ancient historians. However, Dibelius observed that Luke used *oratio recta*, whereas the other ancient historians made greater use of *oratio obliqua*. Luke also used extensive repetition, usually with reference to the Christian message. In this way Luke is also a preacher, which in the opinion of Dibelius sets him apart from the other historians. The purpose of the speeches, in Dibelius' understanding, must not be reduced to merely recording words. More than an editor, Luke was an author. After recognizing this double character of the speeches, Dibelius concludes that we cannot go as far as to deny the historicity of the speeches.²¹

Probably the first scholar to approach the speeches without reference to the problem of their historicity was M. Soards, who in his holistic approach to the speeches, and extending his study to all the speeches, used literary and rhetorical criticism, giving special emphasis to Luke's uses of *analogy*.²² By pointing to analogical elements in the speeches, Soards achieved "the unification of the diverse and incoherent elements comprised by Acts". This is a very important observation for understanding the function of the speeches in the narrative of the Acts.

At this point we conclude this brief account limited to the most important contributions in studies on the speeches of Acts. Each of the authors mentioned introduced a new chapter in research of the speeches—research that would be developed by their disciples. The studies by Cadbury, Dibelius and Soards deserve much more detailed accounts, but we have limited our attention to underlining only the aspects of their works that formed the basis for the approach presented in this study. However, one aspect of the speeches that has been consciously avoided thus far, must be mentioned. This is the issue of the historicity of the speeches and of the Acts of the Apostles. The reason for neglecting this aspect is that the study focuses entirely only on the speeches, and in particular on their function in the narrative structure of Acts. This narrative structure in foremost here, and as a result the vivid discussions by nineteenth-century German scholars are overlooked in this study. Although there are some scholars today who underline the importance of the issue of historicity, recently more attention has been given to narrative and rhetorical approaches to the text. This change was probably caused by a polarisation of opinions, with one group rejecting the historicity of Acts (e.g. Dibelius, Haenchen, Conzelmann), and another still defending the historicity of Acts (e.g. Bruce, Hemer, Gasque).

21 Dibelius, "The Speeches in Acts and Ancient Historiography," 164.

22 Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*.

Without arguing here for or against the historicity of Acts (in general) and the speeches (in particular), it is necessary to offer some suggestions on the position adopted in the following study.

In Chapter 1 the text of Acts will be presented without the speeches. This is intended to show that Acts without the speeches is a coherent historical text.²³ The narrative part of Acts, in our opinion, should be considered as being historical in general terms. By this we mean that the events, which are mentioned in Acts, possess historical credibility.

The historicity of the speeches in Acts is a more complex problem. Dibelius, despite the fact that he considered the speeches as compositions by Luke, wrote: "I should like to say '*if we deny the historicity of the speeches*', but we cannot go so far".²⁴ The sentence indicates the distinction between the composition of the speeches and their *meritum*. Concerning the composition of the speeches, in the form which they now take in Acts, they should be considered to be unhistorical. The redaction work done by Luke or the event created by Luke can be easily recognised, making it impossible to maintain that they are a precise record or even outlines of the original speeches. Chapter 2 of the study will show that Luke used the majority of the speeches (thirty speeches out of a total of forty), as a powerful device with a precise purpose and in a precisely triptych structure. The topical (or thematic) speeches are even in some cases attributed to different speakers, and arranged in the same topic groups, with three speeches in one group, and each speech contributing to developing the same topic. In our opinion, this proves that Luke composed the speeches in their present shape in Acts, but this does not automatically mean that the speeches in Acts are his own invention.

Without doubt there were more speeches given by Peter and John during their mission in Jerusalem than are recorded in Acts. The same must be said of the speeches delivered by Paul during his mission journey, during the voyage to Rome and during the stay in Rome. Stephen was not the only Jewish Christian to give his life for his conviction. They were other outsiders who spoke about the new sect and its members than are mentioned by the author. Luke had to include the already developed tradition containing the written sources, events he was witness to, the oral tradition, and the reminiscences of the apostles. However, more challenging was the task of putting all this together in a co-

23 It is possible that after removing the dialogues from the text presented in chapter 1, the narrative that remains could probably be seen as the final redaction of Luke's use of his sources. This consideration requires a separate study. The same applies to the question of the function of the dialogues in the Acts of the Apostles.

24 Dibelius, "The Speeches in Acts and Ancient Historiography," 164.

herent and compact narrative. He created the structure of Acts (beginning from Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and going to the ends of the earth), and he found heroes and chose the main topic(s) for each section.²⁵ We think that the result of his work on the sources would be similar to the text presented in Chapter 1 of the present study. However, information in itself does not amount to knowledge, and the mere handing on of information was not the only purpose of Luke's attempt. That information, in order to be understood correctly, must be explained, and for this purpose Luke used the device of the speeches, which take hermeneutical function in Acts. Luke composed the speeches, but they also contain a historical foundation and have historical merit. Each section and subsection of the narrative contains speeches, which on the one hand show the most critical issue point of the unit, and on the other hand they give a key to interpret the information provided in narrative section. In this sense the speeches should be counted as having historical value.

3 Contributions to the Study of the Speeches in the Acts of the Apostles

For various reasons the Acts of the Apostles has received considerable attention on the part of scholars, who each contributed in their own way to the quest for understanding Acts. In the history of the study of Acts there are milestones in the research that opened new perspectives on this second volume of Luke's writings. Based on these works, each of the scholars who wrote about the speeches in the Acts, contributed a link to the chain of study. We hope that this work will contribute to the study of Acts in the way indicated by M. Soards and O. Padilla.

The main concern of the study will be the function of the speeches in the narrative structure of Acts. The study will approach the issue from three different perspectives. The first perspective, general in its character, concerns the function of the speeches as a literary genre in the structure of the Acts. To show this function is the purpose of the first chapter. The second perspective concerns the function of the topical speeches (the speeches, which develop the same topic) and of the structural speeches (the speeches without the topic, which is developed in another speech) in each particular section of the narrative in Acts. The result of the analysis provided in chapters two and chapter three will be presented in chapter four. This perspective is something new in

25 This allows us to understand some particular events in a more general sense, as the indicators of a wider reality.

the study of Acts. The third perspective considers each of the speeches individually. For each speech, we will provide three kinds of analysis: first, a narrative or structural analysis with a short outline of the context; secondly, we offer an analysis of the meaning of the speech with additional exegetical explanation; and thirdly, we examine the function of the speech. The analyses will be provided in chapter two (the topical speeches) and chapter three (the structural speeches). We will follow the trajectory created by Soards and Padilla, except for the division of the speeches.

This study arose from suspicions concerning the historical credibility of the speeches. They were raised by the simple fact that Luke gives the account of the speeches, which he himself did not hear, and it is hardly possible that he had access to any written version of the speeches (e.g. the speech of Stephen; or the letter of Lysias). Other doubts arise from the similarity between some of the speeches (e.g. when we compare the speech at Lystra with that on the Areopagus; the Paul's speech outside the Temple with the speech before Herod Agrippa II), and also the lack of any connection between the content of some speeches and their context (as in the speech of Stephen). On the other hand, the approach of those scholars, who doubt the historicity of Acts based on the unhistorical character of the speeches, is not entirely convincing. An attempt to solve the problem led to an examination of the problem of the relation between the narrative section of Acts and the section of speeches. The works of Soards and Padilla opened the gate for an examination of the speeches outside the narrative section of the Acts, what naturally led to underlining the function of the speeches. However, both of these authors still study the speeches in a separate manner, giving little attention to their inner relations.²⁶ Preliminary study of the problem brought attention to the possibility that some speeches are closely related to each other in their consideration of a topic, which is gradually developed.²⁷ The present study is an attempt to extend this consideration to include all the speeches.

There are three purposes in the study. The first will concern the distinction to be made between the narrative and the speech sections of Acts. The basic reason for the distinction is their different functions. The distinction does not refer to the integrity of Acts, although we suppose that narrative section and

26 Soards underlines the *analogy* of the elements contained in different speeches, however he recognises the *analogy* as the device, which underlines the similarity between the elements used for creating the speeches, but without recognition of relationship purposely created by Luke between the speeches.

27 Not all the speeches fit well into this concept. Some ideas are developed and take their final shape through two different groups of speeches.

the speech section were written separately by the same author and in the same period. This approach may help to advance the discussion concerning the genre of Acts by taking into account the different genres used in the narrative section and the speech section.

The second purpose will be to insist that each of the speeches should be analysed from three different perspectives (in general, as a group, and as an individual speech). The general perspective will show that each speech is part of a section that differs from the narrative section. The group perspective will show that there is an inner relation between the speeches that are connected with the same topic. The particular perspective will show that each of the speeches has its own function within the narrative of Acts, especially those speeches considered to be structural speeches.

The third purpose will be to determine the function of the speeches within the literary genre of Acts. Our position is that the speeches have a hermeneutical rather than a historical function in the Acts of the Apostles.

In order to achieve the purpose of the study we use a diachronic method, separating the speeches from the text of the Acts of the Apostles, and giving particular attention in the analysis to the speeches. We suppose that speech section possibly was not written as the integral part of the narrative section, which means that Luke first wrote the narrative section and then went to work on the speeches section. For the analysis of the meaning and the function of the speeches we use rhetorical and narrative criticism. We make use of rhetorical criticism to analyse the speeches, which were constructed as direct speeches by Luke according to the rhetorical standards, in order to indicate their function and character in the structure of Acts. The reason for using narrative criticism derives from the fact that some speeches (especially the topical speeches) contain a more complex message than can be reduced to a theological intent, and this can be more easily uncovered when the narrative context is considered.

In order to achieve the purpose of the study we will divide the material into four chapters. The first chapter is preparatory. The text of the Acts of the Apostles presented in the chapter will prepare the background for the study of the speeches. The main function of the chapter will be to show that the Acts of the Apostles, even without the speeches, gives a coherent and reliable historical and chronological account. Put negatively, the speeches are not necessary to coherence of the historical account in Acts. In positive way, the function of the speeches in Acts must differ from the historical and chronological presentation of the account. These conclusions will justify the treatment of the speeches presented in the next chapters. Chapter 2 will contain analyses of the speeches that are categorised as topical speeches because they include

the same topic that is presented in progressive manner. The speeches will be gathered into three general sections according to geographical structure offered in Ac 1,8. Each section will contain subsections, which are determined according to topic, persons, and key places. We contend that Luke arranged the topical speeches in a triptych structure, in which the first speech has an introductory function, the second speech takes a progressive function and the third speech has a conclusive function in the presentation of one and the same topic. Within the triptych structure, each of the speeches is analysed in three dimensions. The first dimension is structural and narrative in order to determine the way the speech was constructed. The second dimension attempts to uncover the meaning of the speech. For this purpose exegetic analysis will be employed from time to time. The third dimension aims at determining the functions of the speeches: first, the function of the particular speech in itself, and then the function of the speech within the triptych structure. Chapter 3 will contain analyses of the speeches categorised as structural speeches. These are speeches, which do not fall under the category of the topical speeches due to their lack of a topic, which is developed in the next speech. The structural speeches have no direct relation to the other speeches but they are related to the particular narrative section. These speeches will be analysed in the three dimensions similar to the topical speeches. Chapter 4 will contain the results of the analyses provided in the preceding chapters. However, the topical speeches and structural speeches will be arranged chronologically.

We will include our translation of all the speeches in order to give the reader direct access to the text that is being analysed. Also in Chapter 1 we include the English translation of the Acts of the Apostles, excluding the speeches.²⁸

28 The English text of the narrative parts of the Acts of the Apostles is given according to the Open English Bible translation (<http://openenglishbible.org>, 2016).

The Acts of the Apostles without Speeches

It may seem unusual to present in this first chapter the text of the writing, which is the subject of the study. However, to answer the question concerning the function of the speeches in Acts requires that we separate the speeches from the author's narration of the facts and their interpretation. Otherwise, the speeches will inevitably be analysed and interpreted within the context of the narrative. Separation of the speeches from the narration will make it possible to analyse the relation between the speeches themselves, which will help to determine their function in the Acts.

A presentation of the text of the Acts of the Apostles without the speeches will show that the narrative remains coherent and, apart from a few exceptions in detail, is eminently readable. Even without the speeches, the Acts of the Apostles gives the reader a historical account of the beginning of Christianity. Naturally, without the speeches, the narration in Acts is robbed of many important details, and of interpretations that are mostly of a theological nature and in many cases change entirely the meaning of Acts. However, it is only in this way that the reason for the analysis of the speeches' function separately from their narrative can be justified.

The reader's indulgence is requested here, and it is asked to read the present chapter as it is, without reference to a residual recollection of the full text of Acts. The verses before and after the deleted speeches have not been modified, with the result that the account is sometimes uneven.

At the end of each chapter of the Acts of the Apostles (without speeches) a short summary is given, which will be used for the analysis given in Chapter 4 of this study.

1 The Text of the Acts of the Apostles without the Speeches

1.1 *Ac 1*

¹ The first account which I drew up, Theophilus, dealt with all that Jesus did and taught from the very first, ² down to that day on which he was taken up to heaven, after he had, by the help of the Holy Spirit, given instructions to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³ With abundant proofs, he showed himself to them, still living, after his death; appearing to them from time to time during forty days, and speaking of all that related to the kingdom of God.

(...) Ac 1, 4–8—The Speech of Jesus

⁹ [No sooner had Jesus said this] than he was caught up before their eyes, and a cloud received him from their sight. ¹⁰ While they were still gazing up into the heavens, as he went, suddenly two men, clothed in white, stood beside them, ¹¹ and said, “People of Galilee, why are you standing here looking up into the heavens? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into the heavens, will come in the same way in which you have seen him go into the heavens.” ¹² Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away. ¹³ When they reached Jerusalem, they went to the upstairs room, where they were staying. There were there Peter, John, James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴ They all united in devoting themselves to prayer, and so did some women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. ¹⁵ About this time, at a meeting of the Lord’s followers, when there were about a hundred and twenty present, Peter rose to speak.

(...) Ac 1, 16–22—The Speech of Peter

²³ So they put forward two men, Joseph called Barsabas, whose other name was Justus, and Matthias; ²⁴ and they offered this prayer: “Lord, who reads all hearts, show which of these two men you have chosen ²⁵ to take the place in this apostolic work, which Judas has abandoned, to go to his proper place.” ²⁶ Then they drew lots between them; and, the lot having fallen to Matthias, he was added to the number of the eleven apostles.

Note about narrative: the narration concerns first the post-resurrection encounter of Jesus and the disciples, and his consequent “departure” (Ac 1,1–3,9–11), and next the life of the group of Twelve afterwards (Ac 1,12–14). The narration in chapter 1, without the speeches, is coherent and logical, without entering into details or further specification. With few stylistic corrections, the narrative gives a schematic but accurate account of the events. However, without the speech Ac 1,4–8, the reader would be robbed of Jesus’ orders concerning staying in Jerusalem and the mission to the world, as well as the whole narrative of Acts would be robbed of its literary schema. Although, with some stylistic corrections Ac 1,12–16 would inform the reader of some changes in membership in very general manner, however without the speech Ac 1,16–22 the narration would lack detailed information about Judas’ replacement, which is of crucial importance for validating the use of the term “*the Twelve*” by Luke in the following narrative.

Note about the speeches: preliminary observation concerns structural function of these two speeches in context of Ac 1, where the first one gives general introduction to the whole narrative of Acts, and the second one makes the necessary preparation for appropriate use of the term “the Twelve”, which in Luke’s narrative takes on theological significance.

1.2 *Ac 2*

¹ In the course of the Pentecost the disciples had all met together, ² when suddenly there came from the heavens a noise like a strong wind rushing by; it filled the whole house in which they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared tongues of what seemed to be flame, separating, so that one settled on each of them; ⁴ and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in different languages as the Spirit prompted their utterances. ⁵ Now there were then staying in Jerusalem religious Jews from every country in the world; ⁶ and, when this sound was heard, numbers of people collected, in the greatest excitement, because each of them heard the disciples speaking in his own language. ⁷ They were utterly amazed, and kept asking in astonishment, “What! Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans?” ⁸ Then how is it that we each of us hear them in our own language? ⁹ Some of us are Parthians, some Medes, some Elamites; and some of us live in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Roman Asia, ¹⁰ in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the districts of Libya adjoining Cyrene; some of us are visitors from Rome, ¹¹ either Jews by birth or converts, and some are Cretans and Arabians—yet we all alike hear them speaking in our own languages of the great things that God has done.” ¹² They were all utterly amazed and bewildered.

(...) *Ac 2, 14–40—The Pentecost Speech*

⁴¹ So those who accepted his teaching were baptized, and about three thousand people joined the disciples on that day alone. ⁴² They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the Common life of the church, to the breaking of the bread and to the Prayers. ⁴³ A deep impression was made on everyone, and many wonders and signs were done at the hands of the apostles. ⁴⁴ All who became believers in Christ held everything for the common use; ⁴⁵ they sold their property and their goods, and shared the proceeds among them all, according to their individual needs. ⁴⁶ Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the Temple Courts, and to the breaking of bread at their homes, while they partook of their food in simple-hearted gladness, praising God, and winning the goodwill of all the people. ⁴⁷ And the Lord daily added to their company those who were in the path of salvation.

Note about narrative: even without the speech, the narration of chapter 2, gives a coherent account of the Pentecost event, where the coming down of the Holy Spirit and ecstatic prophecy of the believers caused by the Holy Spirit are the reason for the international crowd's interest in the attitude of the Twelve and their co-believers. It results in the first encounter of the Twelve with people from the around the world that in turn shapes Peter's speech, which caused many of them to become believers in Jesus, the Messiah. Although, without the speech, the account clearly indicates the fact that Peter's speech took place and that it brought about a successful result with great impact on Jerusalem society.

Note about the speech: preliminary observation about the speech concerns its content, which presents for the first time the kerygma proclaimed by the Twelve to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and those who visited the city. The presentation of the basic elements of the kerygma gives the speech theological significance by introducing the topic, which is about to be developed in following narrative. That topic concerns Jesus as the Messiah, who gives birth to the new Messianic movement.

1.3 Ac 3

¹ One day, as Peter and John were going up into the Temple Courts for the three o'clock Prayers, a man, who had been lame from his birth, was being carried by. ² This man used to be set down every day at the gate of the Temple called "the Beautiful Gate", to beg of those who went in. ³ Seeing Peter and John on the point of entering, he asked them to give him something. ⁴ Peter fixed his eyes on him, and so did John, and then Peter said, "Look at us." ⁵ The man was all attention, expecting to get something from them; ⁶ but Peter added, "I have no gold or silver, but I give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk." ⁷ Grasping the lame man by the right hand, Peter lifted him up. Instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong, ⁸ and, leaping up, he stood and began to walk about, and then went with them into the Temple Courts, walking, and leaping, and praising God. ⁹ All the people saw him walking about and praising God; ¹⁰ and, when they recognised him as the man who used to sit begging at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, they were utterly astonished and amazed at what had happened to him. ¹¹ While the man still clung to Peter and John, the people all quickly gathered around them in the Colonnade named after Solomon, in the greatest astonishment.

(...) Ac 3, 12–26—The Speech in the Portico of Solomon

Note about narrative: the narrative of Ac 3, without the speech (Ac 3,12–26) is reduced to an account of the healing miracle performed by Peter in the

Temple. Although the narrative (Ac 3,1–11) is coherent and can stand as a short, independent unit, it serves here as direct background for the following speech.

Note about the speech: preliminary observation about the speech concerns its function in developing the theological topic introduced in Peter's speech at Pentecost (Ac 2,14–40). Starting with mention of the healing miracle, Peter smoothly moves to proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah with a particular focus on relations between Jesus and the Jews in the recent past (Ac 3,13–16) characterised by His rejection, as well as attempting to convince the hearers to change their previous attitude towards Jesus. It seems that the speech is of special importance in the process of the presentation to the readers of Luke's theological interpretation of the events related to Jesus' death and His resurrection.

1.4 *Ac 4*

¹ While Peter and John were still speaking to the people, the chief priest, with the officer in charge at the Temple and the Sadducees, came up to them, ² much annoyed because they were teaching the people, and because, through Jesus, they were preaching the resurrection from the dead. ³ They arrested the apostles and, as it was already evening, had them placed in custody until the next day. ⁴ Many, however, of those who had heard the apostles' message became believers in Christ, the number of the men alone amounting to about five thousand. ⁵ The next day, a meeting of the leaders of the people, the elders, and the teachers of the Law was held in Jerusalem. ⁶ There were present Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and all who were of High-Priestly rank. ⁷ They had Peter and John brought before them, and questioned them. "By what power," they asked, "Or in whose name have men like you done this thing?"

(...) Ac 4, 8–12—The First Speech of Peter before the Sanhedrin
(The First Part)

¹³ When the Council saw how boldly Peter and John spoke, and found that they were uneducated men of humble station, they were surprised, and realised that they had been companions of Jesus. ¹⁴ But, when they looked at the man who had been healed, standing there with them, they had nothing to say. ¹⁵ So they ordered them out of court, and then began consulting together. ¹⁶ "What are we to do to these men?" they asked one another. "That a remarkable sign has been given through them is obvious to everyone living in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. ¹⁷ But, to prevent this thing from spreading further among the people, let us warn them not to speak in this name any more to anyone whatever." ¹⁸ So they called the apostles in, and ordered them not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus.

(...) Ac 4, 19–20—The First Speech of Peter before the Sanhedrin
(The Second Part)

²¹ However, after further warnings, the Council set them at liberty, not seeing any safe way of punishing them, because of the people, for they were all praising God for what had occurred; ²² for the man who was the subject of this miraculous cure was more than forty years old. ²³ After they had been set at liberty, the apostles went to their friends and told them what the chief priests and the elders had said to them.

(...) Ac 4, 24–30—The Community Prayer

³¹ When their prayer was ended, the place in which they were assembled was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to tell God's message fearlessly. ³² The whole body of those who had become believers in Christ were of one heart and mind. Not one of them claimed any of his goods as his own, but everything was held for the common use. ³³ The apostles continued with great power to bear their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's blessing rested on them all abundantly. ³⁴ Nor was there anyone in need among them, for all who were owners of land or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the sales ³⁵ And laid them at the apostles' feet; and then everyone received a share in proportion to his wants. ³⁶ A Levite of Cyprian birth, named Joseph, (who had received from the apostles the additional name of "Barnabas"—which means "The Consoler"), ³⁷ Sold a farm that belonged to him, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Note about narrative: the narrative of Ac 4 concerns mostly the interrogation of Peter and John before the Sanhedrin (Ac 4,1–21), which indicates a new stage in the relationship of the Twelve and the leaders of Judaism. The narrative without the speeches exposes the antagonistic attitude of the Sanhedrin towards the teaching and action of the Twelve, directly indicating the growing polarisation on both sides, which will in the end take on the shape of open conflict. The second part of the narrative concerns the community meeting to pray (Ac 4,23–31), which ends unexpectedly with the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the whole community, followed by another of Luke's short summaries concerning community life. These accounts are coherent and sufficiently reveal the shape of relations between the Twelve and the Sanhedrin, as well as relations within Jewish Christian community. However, the narrative does not present either the reason for the attitude of the Twelve or the content of the community prayer.

Note about the speeches: preliminary observation about the speeches shows that the function of Peter's speech differs from the function of the community's

prayer. It seems that Peter's speech is a kind of conclusion concerning relations between the Twelve and the Sanhedrin, and it shows the reason for Peter and John's attitude to the Sanhedrin's prohibition. The community prayer reveals the reason for the community's invocation to God in time of distress.

1.5 *Ac 5*

¹ There was, however, a man named Ananias, who, with his wife Sapphira, sold some property, ² and, with her connivance, kept back some of the proceeds. He brought only a part and laid it at the apostles' feet. ³ "Ananias," Peter exclaimed, "how is it that Satan has so taken possession of your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit, and kept back a part of the money paid for the land? ⁴ While it was unsold, was not it your own? And after it was sold, was not the money at your own disposal? How did you come to think of such a thing? You have lied, not to people, but to God!" ⁵ As Ananias heard these words, he fell down and expired; and everyone who heard of it was appalled. ⁶ The young men got up, and, winding the body in a sheet, carried it out and buried it. ⁷ After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ "Is it true," Peter asked, addressing her, "that you sold your land for such a sum?" "Yes," she answered, "we did." ⁹ Then Peter said, "How did you come to agree to provoke the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The footsteps of those who have buried your husband are at the door; and they will carry you out too." ¹⁰ Instantly Sapphira fell down at Peter's feet and expired. On coming in, the young men found her dead; so they carried her out and buried her by her husband's side. ¹¹ The whole church and all who heard of these events were appalled. ¹² Many signs and wonders continued to occur among the people, through the instrumentality of the apostles, whose custom it was to meet all together in the Colonnade of Solomon; ¹³ but of the rest no one ventured to join them. On the other hand, the people were full of their praise, ¹⁴ and still larger numbers, both of men and women, as they became believers in the Lord, were added to their number. ¹⁵ The consequence was that people would bring out their sick even into the streets, and lay them on mattresses and mats, in the hope that, as Peter came by, at least his shadow might fall on someone of them. ¹⁶ Besides this, the inhabitants of the towns around Jerusalem flocked into the city, bringing with them their sick and those who were troubled by foul spirits; and they were cured everyone. ¹⁷ At this the high priest was roused to action, and he and all his supporters (who formed the party of the Sadducees), moved by jealousy, ¹⁸ arrested the apostles, and had them placed in custody. ¹⁹ An angel of the Lord, however, opened the prison doors at night and led them out. ²⁰ "Go," he said, "and stand in the Temple Courts, and tell the people the whole message of this new life." ²¹ When they heard this, they went at daybreak into

the Temple Courts, and began to teach. The high priest and his party, on their arrival, summoned the High Council, including all the leaders of the people among the Israelites, and sent to the jail to fetch the apostles.²² But, when the officers got there, they did not find them in the prison; so they returned and reported that,²³ while they had found the goal barred securely and the guards posted at the doors, yet, on opening them, they had not found anyone inside.²⁴ When the officer in charge at the Temple and the chief priests heard their story, they were perplexed about the apostles and as to what all this would lead to.²⁵ Presently, however, someone came and told them that the men whom they had put in prison were actually standing in the Temple Courts, teaching the people.²⁶ Then, the officer went with his men and fetched the apostles—without using violence, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people—²⁷ and then brought them before the Council. The high priest demanded an explanation from them.²⁸ “We gave you strict orders,” he said, “not to teach in this name. Yet you have actually flooded Jerusalem with your teaching, and you want to make us responsible for the death of this man.”

(...) Ac 5, 29–32—The Second Speech of Peter before the Sanhedrin

³³ The members of the Council became frantic with rage [on hearing this], and were for putting the apostles to death.³⁴ But Gamaliel, a Pharisee, who was a Doctor of the Law and who was held in universal respect, rose in the Council, and directed that the men should be taken out of court for a little while.

(...) Ac 5, 35–39—The Speech of Gamaliel

⁴⁰ The Council followed his advice, and, calling the apostles in, had them flogged, and then, after cautioning them not to speak in the name of Jesus, set them free.⁴¹ But the apostles left the Council, rejoicing that they had been thought worthy to suffer disgrace for that name;⁴² and never for a single day, either in the Temple Courts or in private houses, did they cease to teach, or to tell the good news of Jesus, the Christ.

Note about narrative: the narration in chapter 5 concerns two topics, where the first (Ac 5,1–16) refers to a particular problem within Judeo Christian group, and it does not contain any speeches, however there is extensive use of dialogue. The second topic concerns the apostles' imprisonment and their trial before the Sanhedrin (Ac 5,17–42). This section contains two speeches, without which the narrative would stand as coherent and logical, however the narrative would lack details of the Jews' fury against the apostles as well as the reason for the amelioration of their opinion under the influence of Gamaliel.

Note about the speeches: preliminary observation about the speeches shows that both speeches concerns the same topic (official persecution and the trial of the apostles), where the first one reveals the will of the Sanhedrin to put the apostles to the death, and the second the reason why the Sanhedrin did not act according to its initial intention.

1.6 *Ac 6*

¹ About this time, when the number of the disciples was constantly increasing, complaints were made by the Greek speaking Jews against the Aramaic speaking Jews, that their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution.

(...) *Ac 6, 2–4—The Speech of the Twelve*

⁵ [This proposal was unanimously agreed to; and] the disciples chose Stephen—a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit—and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicholas of Antioch, a former convert to Judaism; ⁶ and they brought these men to the apostles, who, after praying, placed their hands on them. ⁷ So God's message spread, and the number of the disciples continued to increase rapidly in Jerusalem, and a large body of the priests accepted the faith. ⁸ Meanwhile Stephen, divinely helped and strengthened, was showing great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹ But some members of the Synagogue of the Freed Slaves (as it was called), Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and Visitors from Cilicia and Roman Asia, were roused to action and began disputing with Stephen; ¹⁰ yet they were quite unable to withstand the wisdom and the inspiration with which he spoke. ¹¹ Then they induced some men to assert that they had heard Stephen saying blasphemous things against Moses, and against God; ¹² and they stirred up the people, as well as the elders and the teachers of the Law, and set on Stephen, and arrested him, and brought him before the High Council. ¹³ There they produced witnesses who gave false evidence. "This man," they said, "is incessantly saying things against this Holy place and the Law; ¹⁴ indeed, we have heard him declare that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and change the customs handed down to us by Moses." ¹⁵ The eyes of all the members of the Council were riveted on Stephen, and they saw his face looking like the face of an angel.

Note about narrative: the narrative of chapter 6 introduces to the reader Stephen, who becomes the hero of the second part of this chapter as well as the main subject of the following chapter. The background for introducing the person of Stephen is a conflict within Jewish Christian community and its solution, which saw that the apostles decided to separate the apostolic prerogative (proclaiming and praying) from the charity prerogative (service for the poor),

the latter to be entrusted to seven men, elected by the community, who are put in charge of economic matters, and Stephen is one of their number. This part of the narrative, without the speech has its own logic and coherence, although the explanation for the apostles' proposal is contained in Peter's speech.

Note about the speech: preliminary observation about the speech shows that the speech is necessary for the coherence of the chapter, in which it indirectly indicates the structural function of the speech. The speech does not develop the topic introduced in the speeches found in chapter 5, instead it serves this particular narrative section.

1.7 Ac 7

¹ Then the high priest asked, "Is this true?"

(...) Ac 7, 2–53—The Speech of Stephan

⁵⁴ [As they listened to this], the Council grew frantic with rage, and gnashed their teeth at Stephen. ⁵⁵ He, filled as he was with the Holy Spirit, fixed his eyes intently on the heavens, and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at God's right hand.

(...) Ac 7, 56—The Speech of Stephan

⁵⁷ At this, with a loud shout, they stopped their ears and all rushed on him, forced him outside the city, ⁵⁸ and began to stone him, the witnesses laying their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹ And they stoned Stephen, while he cried to the Lord ...,

(...) Ac 7, 59–60—The Speech of Stephan

Note about narrative: the narrative of chapter 7 is entirely built around Stephen's speech, reducing the narrative part to very fragmentary and schematic units, which in themselves could not create a coherent chapter. It points to the speech as Luke's main focus of interest in creating this part of Acts. However, the narrative of chapter 7 continues the topic presented in Ac 6,9–14, what makes it possible for the reader to grasp a general idea, of the narrative concerning Stephen, even without the speech.

Note about the speech: preliminary observation about the speech shows that the speech contributes to presentation of the changing relations between Jewish-Christians and the Jews with two new and very controversial issues that led to an escalation of the persecution, culminating in the martyrdom of Stephen. Stephen's statement that God does not live in buildings, roused the crowd's anger, however his statement that Jesus now stands at the right hand of God became the direct reason for his stoning.

1.8 *Ac 8*

¹ Saul approved of his being put to death. On that very day a great persecution broke out against the church which was in Jerusalem; and its members, with the exception of the apostles, were all scattered over the districts of Judea and Samaria. ² Some religious men buried Stephen, with loud lamentations for him. ³ But Saul began to devastate the church; he entered house after house, dragged out men and women alike, and threw them into prison. ⁴ Now those who were scattered in different directions went from place to place proclaiming the good news. ⁵ Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and there began to preach the Christ. ⁶ The people, one and all, listened attentively to what Philip told them, when they heard of, and saw, the miracles which he was working. ⁷ For there were many instances of people with foul spirits, where the spirits, with loud screams, came out of them; ⁸ and many who were paralyzed or lame were cured, so that there was great rejoicing throughout that city. ⁹ There was staying in the city a man named Simon, who had been practicing magic there and mystifying the Samaritan people, giving himself out to be some great being. ¹⁰ Everyone, high and low, paid attention to him. ‘This man,’ they used to say, ‘must be that power of God which people call “The Great Power.”’ ¹¹ And they paid attention to him because they had for a long time been mystified by his magic arts. ¹² However, when they came to believe Philip, as he told them the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. ¹³ Even Simon believed, and after his baptism attached himself to Philip, and was in his turn mystified at seeing signs and great miracles constantly occurring. ¹⁴ When the apostles at Jerusalem heard that the Samaritans had welcomed God’s message, they sent Peter and John to them; ¹⁵ and they, on their arrival, prayed that the Samaritans might receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶ (As yet the Spirit had not descended on any of them; they had only been baptized into the faith of the Lord Jesus). ¹⁷ Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸ When Simon saw that it was through the placing of the apostles’ hands on them that the Spirit was given, he brought them a sum of money and said, ¹⁹ “Give me also this power of yours, so that, if I place my hands on anyone, he may receive the Holy Spirit.”

(...) *Ac 8, 20–23*—The Speech of Peter to Simon

[²⁴ “Pray to the Lord for me, all of you,” Simon answered, “so that none of the things you have spoken of may happen to me.”] ²⁵ Peter and John, having borne their testimony and delivered the Lord’s message, returned to Jerusalem, telling the good news, as they went, in many Samaritan villages. ²⁶ Meanwhile an angel of the Lord had said to Philip, “Set out on a journey southwards, along

the road that runs down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (It is now deserted). ²⁷ So Philip set out on a journey; and on his way he came on an official of high rank, in the service of Candace, Queen of the Abyssinians. He was her treasurer, and had been to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ and was now on his way home, sitting in his carriage and reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹ The Spirit said to Philip, “Go up to the carriage over there and keep close to it.” ³⁰ So Philip ran up, and he heard the Abyssinian reading the prophet Isaiah. “Do you understand what you are reading?” he asked. ³¹ “How can I,” the other answered, “unless someone will explain it to me?” and he invited Philip to get up and sit by his side. ³² The passage of scripture which he was reading was this—‘Like a sheep, he was led away to slaughter, and as a lamb is dumb in the hands of its shearer, so he refrains from opening his lips. ³³ He was humiliated and justice was denied him. Who will tell the story of his generation? For his life is cut off from earth.’ ³⁴ “Now,” said the Treasurer, addressing Philip, “tell me, of whom is the prophet speaking? Of himself, or of someone else?” ³⁵ Then Philip began, and, taking this passage as his text, told him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶ Presently, as they were going along the road, they came to some water, and the Treasurer exclaimed, “Look! Here is water; what is to prevent my being baptized?” ³⁷ Some later manuscripts add: Philip said, “If you believe with your whole heart, you may.” And he replied, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” ³⁸ So he ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water—both Philip and the Treasurer—and Philip baptized him. ³⁹ But, when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, and the Treasurer saw no more of him; for he continued his journey with a joyful heart. ⁴⁰ But Philip was found at Ashdod, and, as he went on his way, he told the good news in all the towns through which he passed, until he came to Caesarea.

Note about narrative: the narrative of chapter 8 concerns the mission in Samaria and Judea, with a special focus on the mission activities of Philip (Ac 8,1–13,26–40). However, the narrative of this section also contains an episode concerning Peter and John’s involvement in mission in Samaria (Ac 8,14–24), and contains a speech of Peter. The narrative concerning the mission of Philip concentrates on proclaiming the kerygma to those, who were outside of Judaism, while the speech of Peter and its context concerns the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is given to those whom He (God) has chosen (Samaritans), by those whom He had previously chosen (the apostles). The narrative concerning Philip even without the speech has its own coherence and logic, however the narrative concerning the conflict between Peter and John on the one side and the magus Simon, on the other, without the speech would be unfinished.

Note about the speech: preliminary observation about the speech shows that it introduces a new topic (the Holy Spirit as the gift of God), which is not developed in this or the next chapter, however it becomes the main topic of the narrative concerning Cornelius and his household (Ac 10–11). It gives the speech an introductory function in the next set of three topical speeches.

1.9 *Ac 9*

¹ Meanwhile Saul, still breathing murderous threats against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, ² and asked him to give him letters to the Jewish congregations at Damascus, authorizing him, if he found there any supporters of the Way, whether men or women, to have them put in chains and brought to Jerusalem. ³ While on his journey, as he was nearing Damascus, suddenly a light from the heavens flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him—“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” ⁵ “Who are you, Lord?” he asked. “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” the voice answered; ⁶ “Yet stand up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.” ⁷ The men traveling with Saul were meanwhile standing speechless; they heard the sound of the voice, but saw no one. ⁸ When Saul got up from the ground, though his eyes were open, he could see nothing. So his men led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus; ⁹ and for three days he was unable to see, and took nothing either to eat or to drink. ¹⁰ Now there was at Damascus a disciple named Ananias, to whom, in a vision, the Lord said, “Ananias.” “Yes, Lord,” he answered. ¹¹ “Go at once,” said the Lord, “to the Straight Street, and ask at Judas’ house for a man named Saul, from Tarsus. He is at this moment praying, ¹² and he has seen, in a vision, a man named Ananias coming in and placing his hands on him, so that he may recover his sight.” ¹³ “Lord,” exclaimed Ananias, “I have heard from many people about this man—how much harm he has done at Jerusalem to your people there. ¹⁴ And, here, too, he holds authority from the chief priests to put in chains all those who invoke your name.” ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “Go, for this man is my chosen instrument to uphold my name before the Gentiles and their kings, and the people of Israel. ¹⁶ I will myself show him all that he has to suffer for my name.” ¹⁷ So Ananias went, entered the house, and, placing his hands on Saul, said, “Saul, my brother, I have been sent by the Lord—by Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here—so that you may recover your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸ Instantly it seemed as if a film fell from Saul’s eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, ¹⁹ and, after he had taken food, he felt his strength return. Saul stayed for some days with the disciples who were at Damascus, ²⁰ and at once began in the synagogues to proclaim Jesus as the Son of God. ²¹ All who

heard him were amazed. “Is not this,” they asked, “the man who worked havoc in Jerusalem among those that invoke this name, and who had also come here for the express purpose of having such persons put in chains and taken before the chief priests?”²² Saul’s influence, however, kept steadily increasing, and he confounded the Jewish people who lived in Damascus by the proofs that he gave that Jesus was the Christ.²³ After some time some of them laid a plot to kill Saul,²⁴ but it became known to him. They even watched the gates day and night, to kill him;²⁵ but his disciples let him down by night through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.²⁶ On his arrival in Jerusalem, Saul attempted to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, as they did not believe that he was really a disciple.²⁷ Barnabas, however, taking him by the hand, brought him to the apostles, and told them the whole story of how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord, and how the Lord had talked to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken out fearlessly in the name of Jesus.²⁸ After that, Saul remained in Jerusalem, in close contact with the apostles; and he spoke fearlessly in the name of the Lord,²⁹ talking and arguing with the Jews of foreign birth, who, however, made attempts to kill him.³⁰ But, when the followers found this out, they took him down to Caesarea, and sent him on his way to Tarsus.³¹ And so it came about that the church, throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, enjoyed peace and became firmly established; and, ordering its life by respect for the Lord and the help of the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.³² Peter, while traveling from place to place throughout the country, went down to visit the people of Christ living at Lydda.³³ There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden for eight years with paralysis.³⁴ “Aeneas,” Peter said to him, “Jesus Christ cures you. Get up, and make your bed.” Aeneas got up at once;³⁵ and all the inhabitants of Lydda and of the Plain of Sharon saw him, and came over to the Lord’s side.³⁶ At Jaffa there lived a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which is in Greek “Dorcas”—a Gazelle. Her life was spent in doing kind and charitable actions.³⁷ Just at that time she was taken ill, and died; and they had washed her body and laid it out in an upstairs room.³⁸ Jaffa was near Lydda, and the disciples, having heard that Peter was at Lydda, sent two men with the request that he come to them without delay.³⁹ Peter returned with them at once. On his arrival, he was taken upstairs, and all the widows came around him in tears, showing the coats and other clothing which Dorcas had made while she was among them.⁴⁰ But Peter sent everybody out of the room, and knelt down and prayed. Then, turning to the body, he said, “Tabitha! Stand up.” She opened her eyes, and, seeing Peter, sat up.⁴¹ Giving her his hand, Peter raised her up, and, calling in the widows and others of Christ’s people, presented her to them alive.⁴² This became known all through Jaffa,

and numbers of people came to believe in the Lord.⁴³ And Peter stayed some days at Jaffa with a tanner named Simon.

Note about narrative: the narrative of chapter 9 concerns two topics, the first refers to the conversion of Saul (Ac 9,1–30), and the second to Peter's mission activities outside of Jerusalem (Ac 9,31–43). The narrative of both topics does not contain any speech, however instead, the narrative about Saul's conversion contains large sections of dialogue. The narrative of Peter's activities on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, serves as direct preparation for the narrative of Ac 10–11.

1.10 *Ac 10*

¹ At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a captain in the regiment known as the "Italian Regiment", ² A religious man and one who revered God, with all his household. He was liberal in his charities to the people, and prayed to God constantly. ³ One afternoon, about three o'clock, he distinctly saw in a vision an angel from God come to him, and call him by name. ⁴ Cornelius fixed his eyes on him and, in great alarm, said, "What is it, Lord?" "Your prayers and your charities," the angel answered, "have been an acceptable offering to God. ⁵ And now, send messengers to Jaffa and fetch a man called Simon, who is also known as Peter. ⁶ He is lodging with a tanner named Simon, who has a house near the sea." ⁷ When the angel, who had spoken to him, had gone, Cornelius called two servants and a religious soldier, who was one of his constant attendants, ⁸ and, after telling them the whole story, sent them to Jaffa. ⁹ On the next day, while these men were on their way, just as they were nearing the town, Peter went up on the housetop about midday to pray. ¹⁰ He became hungry and wanted something to eat; but while it was being prepared, he fell into a trance, ¹¹ and saw that the heavens were open, and that something like a great sail was descending, let down by its four corners towards the earth. ¹² In it were all kinds of quadrupeds, reptiles, and birds. ¹³ Then he was aware of a voice which said—"Stand up, Peter, kill something, and eat." ¹⁴ "No, Lord, I cannot," answered Peter, "for I have never eaten anything defiled and unclean." ¹⁵ Again he was aware of a voice which said—"What God has pronounced clean, do not regard as defiled." ¹⁶ This happened three times, and then suddenly it was all taken up into the heavens.¹⁷ While Peter was still perplexed as to the meaning of the vision that he had seen, the men sent by Cornelius, having enquired the way to Simon's house, came up to the gate, ¹⁸ and called out and asked if the Simon, who was also known as Peter, was lodging there. ¹⁹ Peter was still pondering over the vision, when the Spirit said to him, "There are two men looking for you at this moment. ²⁰ Go down at once and do not hesitate

to go with them, for I have sent them.” ²¹ Peter went down to the men and said, “I am the person you are looking for. What is your reason for coming?” ²² The men replied, “Our captain, Cornelius, a pious man who reverences God and is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, has been instructed by a holy angel to send for you to his house, and to listen to what you have to say.” ²³ So Peter invited them in and entertained them. The next day he lost no time in setting out with them, accompanied by some of the Lord’s followers from Jaffa; ²⁴ and the day following he entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them, and had invited his relatives and intimate friends to meet them. ²⁵ So, when Peter entered the city, Cornelius met him, and, throwing himself at Peter’s feet, bowed to the ground. ²⁶ Peter, however, lifted him up, saying as he did so, “Stand up, I am only human like yourself.” ²⁷ Talking with him as he went, Peter entered the house, where he found a large gathering of people, to whom he said ...

(...) Ac 10, 28–29—The Speech of Peter in the House of Cornelius

³⁰ “Just three days ago this very hour,” Cornelius said, “I was in my house, saying the Afternoon Prayers, when a man in dazzling clothing suddenly stood before me. ³¹ ‘Cornelius,’ he said, ‘your prayer has been heard, and your charities have been accepted, by God. ³² Therefore send to Jaffa, and invite the Simon, who is also known as Peter, to come here. He is lodging in the house of Simon the tanner, near the sea.’ ³³ Accordingly I sent to you at once, and you have been so good as to come. And now we are all here in the presence of God, to listen to all that you have been instructed by the Lord to say.”

(...) Ac 10, 34–43—The Speech of Peter in the House of Cornelius

⁴⁴ Before Peter had finished saying [these] words, the Holy Spirit fell on all who were listening to the message. ⁴⁵ Those converts from Judaism, who had come with Peter, were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been bestowed even on the Gentiles; ⁴⁶ for they heard them speaking in different languages and extolling God. At this Peter asked ...

(...) Ac 10, 47—The Speech of Peter in the House of Cornelius

⁴⁸ And he directed that they should be baptized in the faith of Jesus Christ; after which they asked him to stay there a few days longer.

Note about narrative: the narrative of chapter 10 is concerned exclusively with Peter’s encounter with Cornelius and his household, a turning point in recognition of Gentiles among Jewish Christian communities. The narrative reveals the divine origin of this recognition through dreams/visions, which in turn prepared both Peter and Cornelius for the event of their encounter, and in the

end gives the authoritative, approving sign (the Holy Spirit) of the will of God. The account is built up from the dialogues and the speech of Peter. Even without the speech the narrative has its coherence and logic, however, the contents of Peter's kerygmatic proclamation to the Gentiles could be not gleaned from the narrative section.

Note about the speech: preliminary observation about the speech shows that the speech concerns two topics, the main one refers to Jesus as the risen Saviour (Ac 35–40), and the second to the apostles as witnesses to Jesus' death, resurrection and glorification. It seems that in this speech the Lukan Peter presents the kind of creed the Gentiles believed in, and prepared them to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, even though they have been not yet baptised.

1.11 *Ac 11*

¹ The apostles and the followers throughout Judea heard that even the Gentiles had welcomed God's message. ² But, when Peter went up to Jerusalem, those who were converts from Judaism began to attack him, ³ on the ground that he had visited people who were not circumcised, and had taken meals with them. ⁴ So Peter began to relate the facts to them as they had occurred.

(Ac 11, 5–17)—The Speech of Peter to the Hebrews

¹⁸ On hearing this statement, they said no more, but broke out into praise of God. "So even to the Gentiles," they exclaimed, "God has granted the repentance which leads to life!" ¹⁹ Now those who had been scattered in different directions, in consequence of the persecution that followed the death of Stephen, went as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, telling the message—but only to Jews. ²⁰ Some of them, however, who were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, on coming to Antioch, addressed themselves also to the Jews of foreign birth, telling them the good news about that Lord Jesus. ²¹ The power of the Lord was with them, so that a great number who had learned to believe came over to the Lord's side. ²² The news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³ On coming there he saw to his great joy these tokens of the loving kindness of God, and encouraged them all to make up their minds to be faithful to the Lord—²⁴ For Barnabas was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith—and a large number of people took their stand on the Lord's side. ²⁵ Afterward Barnabas left for Tarsus to look for Saul; ²⁶ and, when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And so it came about that, for a whole year, they attended the meetings of the church there, and taught a large number of people; and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called "Christians". ²⁷ During this time, some prophets came to Antioch from Jerusalem. ²⁸ One of them, named Agabus, came forward

and, under the influence of the Spirit, foretold a great famine that was to spread over all the world—a famine which occurred in the reign of Claudius.²⁹ So the disciples, without exception, determined, in proportion to their means, to send something to help the followers living in Judea.³⁰ And this they did, sending it to the church elders by Barnabas and Saul.

Note about narrative: the narrative of chapter 11 concerns two separate accounts. Firstly it refers to Peter's apology before the community in Jerusalem. This part contains the speech, the largest part of the narrative, however the narrative without the speech remains coherent and logical, but without details, in this case known to the reader from the narrative part of Ac 10. The second part of the narrative concerns the beginning of the community in Syrian Antioch, which in part serves as a preparatory unit for an extensive narrative about Barnabas and Paul in the following chapters of Acts.

Note about the speech: preliminary observation about the speech shows that it contains mostly the same information that had been presented in the narrative part of Ac 10, however the critical importance of the Holy Spirit as the main agent confirming the faith of the Gentiles and their readiness for baptism is transparently indicated (Ac 11,15–17). The conclusion of the speech directly reveals the Holy Spirit as the divine witness to the Gentiles' faith (Ac 11,18).

1.12 *Ac 12*

¹ It was at that time that King Herod began to ill-treat some of the members of the church. ² He had James, the brother of John, beheaded; ³ and, when he saw that the Jews were pleased with this, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. (This was during the Festival of the unleavened bread.) ⁴ After seizing Peter, Herod put him in prison, and entrusted him to the keeping of four Guards of four soldiers each, intending, after the Passover, to bring him up before the people. ⁵ So Peter was kept in prison, but meanwhile the prayers of the church were being earnestly offered to God on his behalf. ⁶ Just when Herod was intending to bring him before the people, on that very night Peter was asleep between two soldiers, chained to them both, while there were sentries in front of the door, guarding the prison. ⁷ Suddenly an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the cell. The angel struck Peter on the side, and roused him with the words, "Get up quickly." ⁸ The chains dropped from his wrists, and then the angel said, "Put on your belt and sandals." When Peter had done so, the angel added, "Throw your cloak around you and follow me." ⁹ Peter followed him out, not knowing that what was happening under the angel's guidance was real, but thinking that he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰ Passing the first Guard, and then

the second, they came to the Iron Gate leading into the city, which opened to them of itself; and, when they had passed through that, and had walked along one street, all at once the angel left him.¹¹ Then Peter came to himself and said, “Now I know beyond all doubt that the Lord has sent his angel, and has rescued me from Herod’s hands and from all that the Jewish people have been expecting.”¹² As soon as he realised what had happened, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who was also known as Mark, where a number of people were gathered together, praying.¹³ On his knocking at the door in the gate, a maidservant, named Rhoda, came to answer it.¹⁴ She recognised Peter’s voice, but in her joy left the gate unopened, and ran in, and told them that Peter was standing outside.¹⁵ “You are mad!” they exclaimed. But, when she persisted that it was so, they said, “It must be his spirit!”¹⁶ Meanwhile Peter went on knocking, and, when they opened the gate and saw him, they were amazed.¹⁷ Peter signed to them with his hand to be silent, and then told them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison, adding, “Tell James and the others all this.” Then he left the house, and went away to another place.¹⁸ In the morning there was a great stir among the soldiers—what could have become of Peter!¹⁹ And, when Herod had made further search for him and failed to find him, he closely questioned the Guard, and ordered them away to execution. Then he went down from Judea to stay at Caesarea.²⁰ It happened that Herod was deeply offended with the people of Tyre and Sidon, but they went in a body to him, and, having succeeded in winning over Blastus, the Chamberlain, they begged Herod for a reconciliation, because their country was dependent on the king’s for its food supply.²¹ On an appointed day Herod, wearing his state robes, seated himself on his throne, and delivered an oration.²² The people kept shouting, “It is the voice of God, and not of a person!”²³ Instantly an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give God the glory; and he was attacked with worms, and died.²⁴ Meanwhile the Lord’s message kept extending, and spreading far and wide.²⁵ When Barnabas and Saul had carried out their mission, they returned to Jerusalem, and took with them John, who was also known as Mark.

Note about narrative: the narrative in chapter 12 concerns Herod Agrippa I’s persecution of the Jewish Christian community in Jerusalem, which resulted in the death of James and the imprisonment of Peter. Divine intervention in Peter’s freeing from prison is the main theme of the narrative, which does not contain a speech, however it contains several short dialogues. The narrative ends with an account of Agrippa’s death, which helps to determine the chronology of Barnabas and Paul’s visit to Jerusalem (Ac 12,20–23), and as is typical of Luke’s narrative style, the short summary (Ac 12,24–25).

1.13 *Ac 13*

¹ Among the members of the church at Antioch there were several prophets and teachers—Barnabas, Simeon who was known by the name of “Black”, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, foster-brother of Prince Herod, and Saul. ² While they were engaged in the worship of the Lord and were fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul, for the work to which I have called them.” ³ Accordingly, after fasting and prayer, they placed their hands on them and dismissed them. ⁴ Barnabas and Saul, sent on this mission, as they were, by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia, and from there sailed to Cyprus. ⁵ On reaching Salamis, they began to tell the message of God in the Jewish synagogues; and they had John with them as an assistant. ⁶ After passing through the whole island, they reached Paphos, where they found an astrologer who pretended to be a prophet—a Jew by birth, whose name was Bar-Joshua. ⁷ He was at the court of the Governor, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who sent for Barnabas and Saul and asked to be told God’s message. ⁸ But Elymas, the astrologer (for that is the meaning of the word), opposed them, eager to divert the Governor’s attention from the faith. ⁹ However, Saul (who is the same as Paul), full of the Holy Spirit, fixed his eyes on him and said, ¹⁰ “You incarnation of deceit and all fraud! You son of the devil! You opponent of all that is good! Will you never cease to divert the straight paths of the Lord? Listen! ¹¹ The hand of the Lord is on you even now, and you will be blind for a time and unable to see the sun.” Immediately a mist and darkness fell on him, and he went feeling about for someone to guide him. ¹² When the Governor saw what had happened, he became a believer in Christ, being greatly impressed by the teaching about the Lord. ¹³ After this, Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and went to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them and returned to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ The others went on from Perga and arrived at Antioch in Pisidia. There they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath and took their seats. ¹⁵ After the reading of the Law and the prophets, the synagogue leader sent them this message—“Friends, if you have any helpful words to address to the people, now is the time to speak.”

(...) *Ac 13, 16–41*—The Speech of Paul at Pisidian Antioch

⁴² As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people begged for a repetition of this teaching on the next Sabbath. ⁴³ After the congregation had dispersed, many of the Jews, and of the converts who joined in their worship, followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue to rely on the loving kindness of God. ⁴⁴ On the following Sabbath, almost all the city gathered to hear God’s message. ⁴⁵ But the sight of the crowds of people filled the minds of the Jews with jealousy, and they kept contradicting Paul’s statements in violent language.

(...) Ac 13, 46–47—The Speech of Paul at Pisidian Antioch

⁴⁸ [On hearing this,] the Gentiles were glad and extolled God's message; and all those who had been enrolled for eternal life became believers in Christ; ⁴⁹ and the Lord's message was carried throughout that district. ⁵⁰ But the Jews incited the women of high social standing who worshiped with them, and the leading men of the town, and started a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their region. ⁵¹ They, however, shook the dust off their feet in protest, ⁵² and went to Iconium, leaving the disciples full of joy and of the Holy Spirit.

Note about narrative: the narrative in chapter 13 concerns two topics, the first refers to the mission in Cyprus, and the account, while lacking any speech, contains separate Pauline utterances that take the form of a curse (Ac 13,10–11). The narrative's second topic, the mission in Pisidian Antioch, contains one speech, which is divided to two parts. The narrative does not build on the speech Ac 13,16–41.46–47, and even without this speech the account would be coherent and logical, after some stylistic corrections, however the most important message, concerning the reason for Paul's mission to Gentiles, would be missing.

Note about the speech: preliminary observation about the speech shows that it contains the kerygma proclaimed to the Jews in the Diaspora, where the main aim is to make them believe in Jesus as the Messiah, who was rejected by the Temple authorities, but was raised and approved by God Himself. Rejection of this kerygma by Jews (in general) forced Paul to proclaim it to Gentiles, indicating on the one hand a general evaluation of Paul's mission to Jews and on the other hand outlining the general pattern of Paul's mission activities.

1.14 *Ac 14*

¹ The same thing occurred in Iconium, where Paul and Barnabas went into the Jewish synagogue, and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed in Christ. ² But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles, and poisoned their minds against the Lord's followers. ³ Therefore Paul and Barnabas spent a long time there, and spoke out fearlessly, relying on the Lord, who confirmed the message of his love by permitting signs and wonders to take place at their hands. ⁴ But the townspeople were divided, some siding with the Jews, some with the apostles; ⁵ and, when there was an attempt on the part of both Gentiles and Jews, with their leaders, to resort to violence and to stone them, ⁶ the apostles heard of it, and took refuge in Lystra and Derbe, towns in Lycaonia, and in the district around, ⁷ and there they continued to tell the good news. ⁸ In the streets of Lystra there used to sit a man who had no power in his feet; he had been lame from his birth, and had never walked. ⁹ This man was listening to Paul speaking, when Paul, looking intently at him,

and seeing that he had the faith to be healed, ¹⁰ said loudly, “Stand upright on your feet.” The man leaped up, and began walking about, ¹¹ and the crowd, seeing what Paul had done, called out in the Lycaonian language, “The Gods have come down to us in human form.” ¹² So they called Barnabas ‘Zeus,’ and Paul ‘Hermes,’ because he took the lead in speaking; ¹³ and the priest of Zeus-beyond-the-Walls, accompanied by the crowd, brought bullocks and garlands to the gates, with the intention of offering sacrifices. ¹⁴ But, when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd.

(...) Ac 14, 15–17—The Speech of Paul and Barnabas at Lystra

¹⁸ [Even with this appeal] they could hardly restrain the people from offering sacrifice to them. ¹⁹ Presently, however, there came some Jews from Antioch, and Iconium who, after they had won over the people, stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the town, thinking him to be dead. ²⁰ But, when the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the town; the next day he went with Barnabas to Derbe. ²¹ After telling the good news throughout that town, and making a number of converts, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, ²² reassuring the minds of the disciples, urging them to remain true to the faith, and showing that it is only through many troubles that we can enter the kingdom of God. ²³ They also appointed elders for them in every church, and, after prayer and fasting, commended them to the Lord in whom they had learned to believe. ²⁴ Paul and Barnabas then went through Pisidia, and came into Pamphylia, ²⁵ and, after telling the message at Perga, went down to Attaleia. ²⁶ From there they sailed to Antioch—the place where they had been committed to the gracious care of God for the work which they had now finished. ²⁷ After their arrival, they gathered the church together, and gave an account of all that God had helped them to do, and especially how he had opened to the Gentiles the door of faith; ²⁸ and at Antioch they stayed with the disciples for a considerable time.

Note about narrative: the narrative in chapter 14 concerns Barnabas and Paul’s mission in the Pamphylia and Pisidia regions, with a special focus on the events in Lystra (Ac 14,8–20), and their return back to Syrian Antioch (Ac 14,21–28). The account concerning Lystra contains the speech, which is not necessary for the narrative to remain coherent and logical, after some small literary corrections of the text.

Note about the speech: preliminary observation about the speech shows that it concerns the kerygma proclaimed to Gentiles, which takes the shape of a typical Jewish mission proclaimed without the specific Christian kerygma that

usually puts a strong focus on the person of Jesus. In this speech Paul calls the Gentiles to turn back from the gods and turn to the living God, the creator of the universe. The speech shows a partial resemblance to the speech at Areopagus (Ac 17,22–31), which suggests its structural function in the Lukan narrative of Acts.

1.15 *Ac 15*

¹ But certain persons came down from Judea, and began to teach the Lord's followers that, unless they were circumcised, in accordance with the custom required by Moses, they could not be saved. ² This gave rise to a serious dispute, and much discussion, between Paul and Barnabas and these people, and it was therefore settled that Paul and Barnabas and others of their number should go up to Jerusalem, to consult the apostles and church elders about the matter under discussion. ³ The church, therefore, sent them on their journey, and they made their way through Phoenicia and Samaria, telling the story of the conversion of the Gentiles, to the great joy of all the followers. ⁴ On their arrival at Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church, as well as by the apostles and the elders, and gave an account of all that God had helped them to do. ⁵ Some of the Pharisees' party, however, who had become believers in Christ, came forward and declared that they were bound to circumcise converts and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses. ⁶ The apostles and the church elders held a meeting to consider this question.

(...) *Ac 15, 7–11*—The Speech of Peter to the Council

¹² Every voice in the assembly was hushed, as they listened to Barnabas and Paul, while they gave an account of all the signs and wonders which God had shown among the Gentiles through them.

(...) *Ac 15, 13–21*—The Speech of James

²² It was then decided by the apostles and the elders, with the assent of the whole church, to choose some of their number, and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. Those chosen were Judas (called Barsabas) and Silas, who were leaders among the community.

(...) *Ac 15, 23–29*—The Decree of the Jerusalem Council

³⁰ So the bearers of this letter were sent on their way, and went down to Antioch. There they called a meeting of all the followers, ³¹ and delivered the letter, the reading of which caused great rejoicing by its encouraging contents. ³² Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, further encouraged them by many an address, and strengthened their faith. ³³ After some stay, they were

dismissed with kind farewells from the followers, and returned to those who had sent them.³⁴ Some later manuscripts add: But Silas decided to stay.³⁵ Paul and Barnabas, however, remained in Antioch, where they taught and, with the help of many others, told the good news of the Lord's message.³⁶ Sometime after this, Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the Lord's followers in every town in which we have told the Lord's message, and see how they are prospering."³⁷ Barnabas wished to take with them John, who's other name was Mark;³⁸ but Paul felt that they ought not to take with them the man who had deserted them in Pamphylia, and had not gone on with them to their work.³⁹ This caused such unpleasant feeling between them that they parted ways, Barnabas taking Mark and sailing for Cyprus,⁴⁰ while Paul chose Silas for his companion and, after he had been committed by the followers to the gracious care of the Lord,⁴¹ started on his journey and went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches in the faith.

Note about narrative: the narrative in chapter 15 is entirely concerned with the so-called Jerusalem council. It contains three speeches, which are not necessary for the coherence and logic of the narrative of the chapter. The narrative part of the chapter can stand alone, however the part concerning the council itself would be very schematic and in fact reduced to some limited and rather enigmatic information.

Note about the speeches: preliminary observation about the speeches shows that they concern the same topic, which is indicated in the first speech, then developed in the second speech and concluded in the third speech. The speeches serve as the place where the way of solving the problem and its final result are presented.

1.16 *Ac 16*

¹ Among other places Paul went to Derbe and Lystra. At the latter place they found a disciple, named Timothy, whose mother was a Jewish woman who was a believer, while his father was a Greek,² and who was well spoken of by the followers of the Lord in Lystra and Iconium.³ Wishing to take this man with him on his journey, Paul caused him to be circumcised out of consideration for the Jews in that region, for they all knew that his father had been a Greek.⁴ As they travelled from town to town, they gave the followers the decisions, which had been reached by the apostles and church elders at Jerusalem, for them to observe.⁵ So the churches grew stronger in the faith, and increased in numbers from day to day.⁶ They next went through the Phrygian district of Galatia, but were restrained by the Holy Spirit from delivering the message in Roman Asia.⁷ When they reached the borders of Mysia, they attempted to go

into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them.⁸ Passing through Mysia, they went down to Troas;⁹ and there one night Paul saw a vision. A Macedonian was standing and appealing to him—"Come over to Macedonia and help us."¹⁰ So, immediately after Paul had seen the vision, we looked for an opportunity to cross over to Macedonia, concluding that God had summoned us to tell the good news to the people there.¹¹ Accordingly we set sail from Troas, and ran before the wind to Samothrace, reaching Neapolis the next day.¹² From there we made our way to Philippi, which is the principal city of that part of Macedonia, and also a Roman Settlement. In that city we spent several days.¹³ On the Sabbath we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and talked to the women who were gathered there.¹⁴ Among them was a woman, named Lydia, belonging to Thyatira, a dealer in purple cloth, who was accustomed to join in the worship of God. The Lord touched this woman's heart, so that she gave attention to the message delivered by Paul,¹⁵ and, when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us to become her guests. "Since you have shown your conviction," she said, "that I really am a believer in the Lord, come and stay in my house." And she insisted on our doing so.¹⁶ One day, as we were on our way to the place of prayer, we were met by a girl possessed by a divining spirit, who made large profits for her masters by fortune-telling.¹⁷ This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, calling, "These men are servants of the most high God, and they are bringing you news of a way to salvation."¹⁸ She had been doing this for several days, when Paul, much vexed, turned and said to the spirit within her, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to leave her." That very moment the spirit left her.¹⁹ When her masters saw that there was no hope of further profit from her, they seized Paul and Silas, dragged them into the public square to the authorities,²⁰ and took them before the Magistrates. "These men are causing a great disturbance in our town," they complained;²¹ "They are Jews, and they are teaching customs which it is not right for us, as Romans, to sanction or adopt."²² The mob rose as one person against them, and the Magistrates stripped them of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods.²³ After beating them severely, the Magistrates put them in prison, with orders to the jailer to keep them in safe custody.²⁴ On receiving so strict an order, the Governor put them into the inner cell, and secured their feet in the stocks.²⁵ About midnight, while Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and while the prisoners were listening to them,²⁶ suddenly there was an earthquake of such violence that the jail was shaken to its foundations; all the doors flew open, and all the prisoners' chains were loosened.²⁷ Roused from his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, the Governor drew his sword intending to kill himself, in the belief that the

prisoners had escaped.²⁸ But Paul called out loudly, “Do not harm yourself; we are all here.”²⁹ Calling for a light, the Governor rushed in, and flung himself trembling at the feet of Paul and Silas.³⁰ Then he led them out, and said, “What must I do to be saved?”³¹ “Believe in Jesus, our Lord,” they replied, “and you will be saved, you and your household too.”³² Then they spoke to him of God’s message, and to all his household as well.³³ And that very hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds, and he himself and everyone belonging to him were baptized without delay.³⁴ Afterward he took them up to his house and set before them something to eat, rejoicing that he, with all his household, had come to believe in God.³⁵ In the morning the Magistrates sent the police with an order for the men to be discharged.³⁶ The jailer told Paul of his instructions. “The Magistrates have sent an order for your discharge,” he said, “so you had better leave the place at once and go quietly away.”³⁷ But Paul’s answer to them was, “They have flogged us in public without trial, though we are Roman citizens, and they have put us in prison, and now they are for sending us out secretly! No, indeed! Let them come and take us out themselves.”³⁸ The police reported his words to the Magistrates, who, on hearing that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, were alarmed,³⁹ and went to the prison, and did their best to conciliate them. Then they took them out, and begged them to leave the city.⁴⁰ When Paul and Silas left the prison, they went to Lydia’s house, and, after they had seen the Lord’s followers, and encouraged them, they left the place.

Note about narrative: the narrative in chapter 16 concerns the beginning of Paul’s second mission journey (Ac 16,1–10), and mostly concentrates on the mission in Macedonia (Ac 16,11–40). The narrative concerning Paul’s mission in Philippi and his imprisonment in this city is extensively elaborated. The narrative contains no speech, but there is extensive use of dialogue and utterances.

1.17 *Ac 17*

¹ After passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, Paul and Silas came to Thessalonica. Here the Jews had a synagogue; ² and, following his usual custom, Paul joined them, and for three Sabbaths addressed them, drawing his arguments from the scriptures. ³ He laid before them and explained that the Christ must undergo suffering and rise from the dead; and “It is this man,” he declared, “who is the Christ—this Jesus about whom I am telling you.” ⁴ Some of the people were convinced, and threw in their lot with Paul and Silas, as did also a large body of Greeks who were accustomed to join in the Jewish services, and a great number of leading women. ⁵ But the Jewish leaders, becoming jealous, engaged some worthless fellows from the streets, and, getting a

mob together, kept the city in an uproar. They attacked Jason's house, with the intention of bringing Paul and Silas before the Popular Assembly; ⁶ and, not finding them there, they proceeded to drag Jason and some of the Lord's followers before the city magistrates, shouting out, "These men, who have turned the world upside down, have now come here, ⁷ and have been harbored by Jason! They are all defying the decrees of the Emperor. They say that someone else is king—a man called Jesus!" ⁸ On hearing this, the people and the city magistrates were much concerned; ⁹ and, before letting them go, they took bail from Jason and the others. ¹⁰ That very night the followers sent Paul and Silas off to Beroea; and on reaching that place, they went to the Jewish synagogue. ¹¹ These Jews of Beroea were better disposed than those in Thessalonica, for they welcomed the message with great readiness, and daily examined the scriptures to see if what was said was true. ¹² As a consequence, many of them became believers in Christ, besides a considerable number of Greek women of position, and of men also. ¹³ But, when the Jewish leaders in Thessalonica found out that God's message had been delivered by Paul at Beroea, they came there too, exciting and disturbing the minds of the people. ¹⁴ The followers immediately arranged for Paul to go away to the coast, but both Silas and Timothy stayed behind in Beroea. ¹⁵ The friends who escorted Paul took him as far as Athens, and, after receiving a message for Silas and Timothy to join him as quickly as possible, they started on their return. ¹⁶ While Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his heart was stirred at seeing the whole city full of idols. ¹⁷ So he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and with those who joined in their worship, as well as daily in the public Square with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸ Among others, some Epicurean and Stoic Philosophers joined issue with him. Some asked "What is this prater wanting to make out?", while others said "He seems to be a preacher of foreign Deities." This was because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. ¹⁹ So they laid hold of him and took him to the Court of Areopagus. "May we hear," they asked, "what new teaching this is which you are giving? ²⁰ For you are bringing some strange things to our notice, and we should like to know what they mean." ²¹ All Athenians and the foreigners staying in the city found no time for anything else but telling, or listening to, the last new thing.

(...) Ac 17, 22–31—The Speech of Paul at the Areopagus

³² On hearing of a resurrection of the dead, some began jeering, but others said that they wanted to hear what he had to say about that another time. ³³ And so Paul left the Court. ³⁴ There were, however, some people who joined him, and became believers in Christ. Among them were Dionysius, a member of the Court of Areopagus, a woman named Damaris, and several others.

Note about narrative: the narrative in chapter 17 concerns Paul's second mission journey from period he went to Thessalonica until he reached the city of Corinth. The narrative concerning Thessalonica and Berea gives reasons for Paul's trip to Athens, where he gives the speech, which is the only speech from him during the whole period of the second mission journey. Although, the short account of Paul's stay at Athens serves as the background for his speech, the narrative of Ac 17 remains coherent and logical even without the speech, however the reader would merely be informed that Paul spoke at the Areopagus and that his speech was generally not accepted.

Note about the speech: preliminary observation about the speech shows that it is the only speech of Paul during this mission journey that, although first addressed to Jews, *de facto* turns it into a mission to the Gentiles. This fact alongside the contents of the speech, which includes also some parts very similar to those found in Paul's speech at Lystra, indicates probably a special function of the speech. The fact that speech is interrupted at the very moment that Paul proclaims the resurrected Jesus as the judge of all humankind suggests that this is the point in Paul's kerygma, which could not be easily accepted by Gentile audience, one strongly rooted in Greek culture and philosophy but one hardly familiar with Jewish religious thought.

1.18 Ac 18

¹ On leaving Athens, Paul next went to Corinth. ² There he met a Jew of the name of Aquila, from Pontus, who, with his wife Priscilla, had lately come from Italy, in consequence of the order which had been issued by the Emperor Claudius for all Jews to leave Rome. Paul paid them a visit, ³ and, since their trade was the same as his, he stayed and worked with them—their trade was tent-making. ⁴ Every Sabbath Paul gave addresses in the synagogue, trying to convince both Jews and Greeks. ⁵ But, when Silas and Timothy had come down from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself entirely to delivering the message, earnestly maintaining before the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. ⁶ However, as they set themselves against him and became abusive, Paul shook his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads. My conscience is clear. From this time forward I will go to the Gentiles." ⁷ So he left, and went to the house of a certain Titius Justus, who had been accustomed to join in the worship of God, and whose house was next door to the synagogue. ⁸ Crispus, the synagogue leader, came to believe in the Lord, and so did all his household; and many of the Corinthians, as they listened to Paul, became believers in Christ and were baptized. ⁹ One night the Lord said to Paul, in a vision, "Have no fear, but continue to speak, and refuse to be silenced; ¹⁰ for I am with you, and no one will do you harm, for I have many people in this city." ¹¹ So he set-

tled there for a year and a half, and taught God's message amongst the people.
¹² While Gallio was governor of Greece, some of the Jewish leaders made a combined attack on Paul, and brought him before the Governor's Bench,
¹³ charging him with persuading people to worship God in a way forbidden by the Law.

(...) Ac 18, 14–15—The Speech of Gallio

¹⁶ [Saying this,] he drove them back from the Bench. ¹⁷ Then they all set on Sosthenes, the synagogue leader, and beat him in front of the Bench, but Gallio did not trouble himself about any of these things. ¹⁸ Paul remained there some time after this, and then took leave of the followers, and sailed to Syria with Priscilla and Aquila, but not before his head had been shaved at Cenchreae, because he was under a vow. ¹⁹ They put into Ephesus, and there Paul, leaving his companions, went into the synagogue and addressed the Jews. ²⁰ When they asked him to prolong his stay, he declined, saying however, ²¹ as he took his leave, "I will come back again to you, please God," and then set sail from Ephesus. ²² On reaching Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and exchanged greetings with the church, and then went down to Antioch. ²³ After making some stay in Antioch, he set out on a tour through the Phrygian district of Galatia, strengthening the faith of all the disciples as he went. ²⁴ Meanwhile there had come to Ephesus an Alexandrian Jew, named Apollos, an eloquent man, who was well-versed in the scriptures. ²⁵ He had been well-instructed in the Way of the Lord, and with burning zeal he spoke of, and taught carefully, the facts about Jesus, though he knew of no baptism but John's. ²⁶ This man began to speak out fearlessly in the synagogue; and when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him home and explained the Way of God to him more carefully still. ²⁷ When he wanted to cross to Greece, the followers furthered his plans, and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. On his arrival he proved of great assistance to those who had, through the loving kindness of God, become believers in Christ, ²⁸ for he vigorously confuted the Jews, publicly proving by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

Note about narrative: the narrative in chapter 18 concerns Paul's two-year-long mission in Corinth (Ac 18,1–17), and his return to Syrian Antioch, which marks the end of the second mission journey (Ac 18,18–22). The chapter contains also the beginning of the narrative concerning the third mission journey of Paul (Ac 18,23–28). Paul's mission activities in Corinth are presented by Luke in a very short, schematic way. The account focuses particularly on Jewish opposition towards Paul, which however could not succeed due to the Roman official policy concerning involvement of Roman officials in strictly Jewish religious

issues. This policy is directly indicated in the speech of Gallio. The narration of the chapter, with a little grammatical correction of the text of verse 16, would remain coherent and logical, even if the speech is removed.

Note about the speech: preliminary observation about the speech shows that the speech does not have any relation to other speeches in the section, which suggests its structural function in the narrative of the chapter 18, which is to indicate Roman official policy, a policy that makes it possible for Paul to work in places where he meets strong Jewish opposition, but the Corinth's case ends differently from the cases of Thessalonica and Berea.

1.19 *Ac 19*

¹ While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland districts of Roman Asia, and went to Ephesus. There he found some disciples, of whom he asked, ² "Did you, when you became believers in Christ, receive the Holy Spirit?" "No," they answered, "we did not even hear that there was a Holy Spirit." ³ "What then was your baptism?" Paul asked. ⁴ "John's baptism was a baptism on repentance," rejoined Paul, "and John told the people (speaking of the 'one coming' after him) that they should believe in him—that is in Jesus." ⁵ On hearing this, they were baptized into the faith of the Lord Jesus, ⁶ and, after Paul had placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit descended on them, and they began to speak in other languages and to preach. ⁷ There were about twelve of them in all. ⁸ Paul went to the synagogue there, and for three months spoke out fearlessly, giving addresses and trying to convince his hearers, about the kingdom of God. ⁹ Some of them, however, hardened their hearts and refused to believe, denouncing the Way before the people. So Paul left them and withdrew his disciples, and gave daily addresses in the lecture-hall of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ This went on for two years, so that all who lived in Roman Asia, Jews and Greeks alike, heard the Lord's message. ¹¹ God did miracles of no ordinary kind by Paul's hands; ¹² so that people would carry home to the sick handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his body, and their diseases would leave them and the wicked spirits go out of them. ¹³ An attempt was made by some itinerant Jews, who were exorcists, to use the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had wicked spirits in them. "I order you," they would say, "by the Jesus, whom Paul preaches." ¹⁴ The seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this; ¹⁵ but the wicked spirit answered them, "Jesus I acknowledge, and Paul I know, but you—who are you?" ¹⁶ Then the man, in whom this wicked spirit was, sprang on them, mastered both of them, and so completely overpowered them, that they fled out of the house, stripped of their clothes, and wounded. ¹⁷ This incident came to the knowledge of all the Jews and Greeks living at Ephesus; they were all awe-struck, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in the highest honour.

¹⁸ Many, too, of those who had become believers in Christ came with a full confession of their practices; ¹⁹ while a number of people, who had practised magic, collected their books and burnt them publicly; and on reckoning up the price of these, they found it amounted to fifty thousand silver coins. ²⁰ So irresistibly did the Lord's message spread and prevail. ²¹ Sometime after these events Paul resolved to go through Macedonia and Greece, and then make his way to Jerusalem. "And after I have been there," he said, "I must visit Rome also." ²² So he sent to Macedonia two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, while he himself stayed for some time longer in Roman Asia. ²³ Just about that time a great disturbance arose about the Way. ²⁴ A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver models of the shrine of Artemis, and so gave a great deal of work to the artisans, ²⁵ got these men together, as well as the workmen engaged in similar occupations, [and said ...]

(...) Ac 19, 25–27—The Speech of Demetrius

²⁸ [When they heard this,] the men were greatly enraged, and began shouting—"Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" ²⁹ The commotion spread through the whole city, and the people rushed together into the amphitheatre, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, two Macedonians who were Paul's travelling companions. ³⁰ Paul wished to go into the amphitheatre and face the people, but the disciples would not let him, ³¹ while some of the chief religious officials of the province, who were friendly to him, sent repeated entreaties to him not to trust himself inside. ³² Meanwhile some were shouting one thing and some another, for the Assembly was all in confusion, most of those present not even knowing why they had met. ³³ But some of the crowd prompted Alexander, whom several of the Jewish leaders had pushed to the front, and he waved his hand to show that he wanted to speak in their defence to the people. ³⁴ However, when they recognised him as a Jew, one cry broke from them all, and they continued shouting for two hours—"Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" ³⁵ [When] the town clerk had succeeded in quieting the crowd, [he said ...]

(...) Ac 19,35–40—The Speech of the Town Clerk

⁴¹ [With these words] he dismissed the Assembly.

Note about narrative: the narrative in chapter 19 concerns Paul's mission in Ephesus during his third mission journey, with a special focus put on a successful mission among followers of John the Baptist (Ac 19,1–10) and a successful confrontation with charlatans and magicians (Ac 19,11–20). The narrative concerning the first success does not contain any speeches, however Luke makes

extensive use of dialogues in constructing the narrative. His second success led to opposition from craftsmen, who made a living from making accessories used in the cults, and who recognised Paul's mission as dangerous to their economic interests (Ac 19,21–40). The narrative concerning the riot in Ephesus contains two speeches, which after small corrections to the preceding and following verses are not necessary for the coherence and logic of the narrative.

Note about the speeches: preliminary observation about the speeches shows that they serve particular narratives and do not have common topics, although they concern the same event. The speech of Demetrius contains accusations against Paul, which in the end lead to the riot (Ac 19,25–27), and the speech of the town clerk concerning the illegality of Demetrius' action and that of the whole assembly. It suggests that the speeches have a structural function in the narrative of chapter 19.

1.20 *Ac 20*

¹ When the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and, with encouraging words, bade them goodbye, and started on his journey to Macedonia.

² After going through those districts and speaking many encouraging words to the disciples, he went into Greece, where he stayed three months. ³ He was about to sail to Syria, when he learnt that a plot had been laid against him by several of the Jewish leaders; so he decided to return by way of Macedonia.

⁴ He was accompanied by Sopater the son of Pyrrhus, of Beroea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, as well as by Tychicus and Trophimus of Roman Asia. ⁵ These people went to Troas and waited for us there; ⁶ while we ourselves sailed from Philippi after the Passover, and joined them five days later at Troas, where we stayed for a week. ⁷ On the first day of the week, when we had met for the breaking of bread, Paul, who was intending to leave the next day, began to address those who were present, and prolonged his address until midnight. ⁸ There were a good many lamps in the upstairs room, where we had met; ⁹ and a young man named Eutychus, sitting at the window, was gradually overcome with great drowsiness, as Paul continued his address. At last, quite overpowered by his drowsiness, he fell from the third story to the ground, and was picked up for dead. ¹⁰ But Paul went down, threw himself on him, and put his arms around him. "Do not be alarmed," he said, "he is still alive." ¹¹ Then he went upstairs; and, after breaking and partaking of the bread, he talked with them at great length until day-break, and then left. ¹² Meanwhile they had taken the lad away alive, and were greatly comforted. ¹³ We started first, went on board ship, and sailed for Assos, intending to take Paul on board there. This was by his own arrangement, as he intended to go by land himself. ¹⁴ So, when he met us at Assos, we took him

on board and went on to Mitylene.¹⁵ The day after we had sailed from there, we arrived off Chios, touched at Samos the following day, and the next day reached Miletus;¹⁶ for Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so as to avoid spending much time in Roman Asia. He was making haste to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the Festival at the close of the Harvest.¹⁷ From Miletus, however, he sent to Ephesus and invited the church elders to meet him;¹⁸ [and, when they came, he said to them ...]

(...) Ac 20, 18–35—The Speech of Paul at Miletus to the Elders of the Church in Ephesus

³⁶ [When Paul had finished speaking,] he knelt down and prayed with them all. ³⁷ All were in tears; and throwing their arms around Paul's neck, they kissed him again and again, ³⁸ grieving most of all over what he had said that they would never see his face again. Then they escorted him to the ship.

Note about narrative: the narrative in chapter 20 concerns Paul's visit to Macedonia and Achaia regions, after his forced departure from Ephesus (Ac 20,1–5), and his return to Judea, during which he made short stops in several places (Ac 20,6–38). In Troas he gave a speech, which is not recorded by Luke, who places more attention on Paul's miracle that occurred in that place. In Miletus, Paul gives the only speech recorded by Luke during his third mission journey. The account concerning the meeting at Miletus, with the exception of the introduction (v. 17) and the ending (vv. 36–38) of the narrative, is entirely built on the speech, however it is not necessary for the coherence and logic of the account.

Note about the speech: preliminary observation about the speech shows that the meeting at Miletus and the speech given during the meeting is the conclusion of Luke's record concerning the third mission journey, giving a special function to the speech in the narrative concerning Paul's mission activities. The speech indicates that Paul left the church in Ephesus ready to provide for itself.

1.21 *Ac 21*

¹ When we had torn ourselves away and had set sail, we ran before the wind to Cos; the next day we came to Rhodes, and from there to Patara, ² where we found a ship crossing to Phoenicia, and went on board and set sail. ³ After sighting Cyprus and leaving it on the left, we sailed to Syria, and put into Tyre, where the ship was to discharge her cargo. ⁴ There we found the disciples and stayed a week with them. Speaking under the influence of the Spirit, they warned Paul not to set foot in Jerusalem. ⁵ However, when we had come to the end of

our visit, we went on our way, all the disciples with their wives and children escorting us out of the city. We knelt down on the beach, and prayed,⁶ and then said goodbye to one another; after which we went on board, and they returned home.⁷ After we had made the run from Tyre, we landed at Ptolemais, and exchanged greetings with the followers there, and spent a day with them.⁸ The next day we left, and reached Caesarea, where we went to the house of Philip, the missionary, who was one of the Seven, and stayed with him.⁹ He had four unmarried daughters, who had the gift of prophecy.¹⁰ During our visit, which lasted several days, a prophet, named Agabus, came down from Judea.¹¹ He came to see us, and, taking Paul's belt, and binding his own feet and hands with it, said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says—"The man to whom this belt belongs will be bound like this by the religious authorities in Jerusalem, and they will give him up to the Gentiles!"¹² When we heard that, we and the people of the place began to entreat Paul not to go up to Jerusalem.¹³ It was then that Paul made the reply, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart like this? For my part, I am ready not only to be bound, but even to suffer death at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."¹⁴ So, as he would not be persuaded, we said no more to him, only adding—"The Lord's will be done."¹⁵ At the end of our visit, we made our preparations, and started on our way up to Jerusalem.¹⁶ Some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us, and brought Mnason with them, a Cypriot disciple of long standing, with whom we were to stay.¹⁷ On our arrival at Jerusalem, the followers of the Lord there gave us a hearty welcome;¹⁸ and the next day Paul went with us to see James, and all the church elders were present.¹⁹ After greeting them, Paul related in detail all that God had done amongst the Gentiles through his efforts;²⁰ and, when they had heard it, they began praising God, [and said to Paul ...]

(...) Ac 21, 20–25—The Speech of James and the Elders to Paul

²⁶ Paul joined the men, and the next day shared their purification, and went into the Temple, and gave notice of the expiration of the period of purification when the usual offering should have been made on behalf of each of them.²⁷ But, just as the seven days were drawing to a close, some of the Jewish people from Roman Asia caught sight of Paul in the Temple, and caused great excitement amongst all the people present, by seizing Paul and shouting,²⁸ "People of Israel! Help! This is the man who teaches everyone everywhere against our people, our Law, and this place; and, what is more, he has actually brought Greeks into the Temple and defiled this sacred place."²⁹ (For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in Paul's company in the city, and were under the belief that Paul had taken him into the Temple.)³⁰ The whole city

was stirred, and the people quickly collected, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the Temple, when the doors were immediately shut.³¹ They were bent on killing him, when it was reported to the officer commanding the garrison that all Jerusalem was in commotion.³² He instantly got together some officers and soldiers, and charged down on the crowd, who, when they saw the commanding officer and his soldiers, stopped beating Paul.³³ Then he went up to Paul, arrested him, ordered him to be doubly chained, and proceeded to enquire who he was, and what he had been doing.³⁴ Some of the crowd said one thing, and some another; and, as he could get no definite reply because of the uproar, he ordered Paul to be taken into the barracks.³⁵ When Paul reached the steps, he was actually being carried by the soldiers, owing to the violence of the mob;³⁶ for the people were following in a mass, shouting out, "Kill him!"³⁷ Just as he was about to be taken into the Fort, Paul said to the commanding officer, "May I speak to you?" "Do you know Greek?" asked the commanding officer.³⁸ "Aren't you, then, the Egyptian who some time ago raised an insurrection and led the four thousand Bandits out into the wilderness?"³⁹ "No," said Paul, "I am a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of a city of some note. I beg you to give me permission to speak to the people."⁴⁰ The commanding officer gave his permission, and Paul, standing on the steps, made signs with his hand to the people, and, when comparative silence had been obtained, he said to them in Hebrew ...

Note about narrative: the narrative in chapter 21 concerns three events relating to Paul's visit to Jerusalem, the first took place in Caesarea and concerns his meeting with believers, who advised him not enter Jerusalem (Ac 21,1–16). This part of the narrative does not contain a speech, but instead contains dialogues. The second event concerns Paul's visit to James, and it contains the only speech in this chapter (Ac 21,17–26). The narrative of this section without the speech would remain coherent and logical, however the narrative would be divided into unrelated units, where first concerns Paul's visit to James and second concerns the ritual of Paul's purification. The third event concerns Paul's arrest in the Temple, which begins the period of Paul's imprisonment (Ac 21,27–40). This very vivid and dynamic narrative contains no speech but makes frequent use of dialogues.

Note about the speech: preliminary observation about the speech shows that it does not have any relation to previous speeches in the narrative, implying rather its structural function in Acts. It seems that speech brings into public domain the controversy concerning the person of Paul among members of Jerusalem community, as well as James' proposal to avoid a potential problem.

1.22 *Ac 22*

(...) *Ac 22, 1–21*—The Speech of Paul to the Crowd Outside the Temple

²² Up to this point the people had been listening to Paul, but at these words they called out, “Kill him! A fellow like this ought not to have been allowed to live!” ²³ As they were shouting, tearing off their clothes, and throwing dust in the air, ²⁴ the commanding officer ordered Paul to be taken into the Fort, and directed that he should be examined under the lash so that he might find out the reason for their outcry against him. ²⁵ But just as they had tied him up to be scourged, Paul said to the captain standing near, “Is it legal for you to scourge a Roman citizen, unconvicted?” ²⁶ On hearing this, the captain went and reported it to the commanding officer. “Do you know what you are doing?” he said. “This man is a Roman citizen.” ²⁷ So the commanding officer went up to Paul and said, “Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?” “Yes,” replied Paul. ²⁸ “I had to pay a heavy price for my position as citizen,” said the officer. “I am one by birth,” rejoined Paul. ²⁹ The men who were to have examined Paul immediately drew back, and the officer, finding that Paul was a Roman citizen, was alarmed at having put him in chains. ³⁰ On the next day the commanding officer, wishing to find out the real reason why Paul was denounced by the Jewish leaders, had his chains taken off, and directed the chief priests and the whole of the High Council to assemble, and then took Paul down and brought him before them.

Note about narrative: the narrative in chapter 22 concerns the beginning of Paul’s imprisonment in Jerusalem, and it contains Paul’s speech outside the Temple (*Ac 22,1–21*) and the crowd’s reaction to this speech (*Ac 22,22–29*). The narrative of chapter 22 is built on the speech, what makes it necessary for the coherence and logic of the account. The reaction of the crowd without the speech would be ungrounded, however if vv. 22–23 were omitted, the speech would not be necessary for coherence of the narrative, which however would take on a different meaning.

Note about the speech: preliminary observation about the speech shows that the speech is necessary not only for the coherence of the narrative in this chapter, but also it is necessary for the coherence and logic of the narrative of whole section concerning Paul’s imprisonment in Jerusalem. In the speech outside the Temple (*Ac 22,1–21*) Paul presents his life as constant and faithful service to God, who led him from the position of Jesus’ persecutor to the position of being the resurrected Jesus’ servant, appointed for the mission to Gentiles. Since both these characteristics concerning Paul, namely his faithful service to God and his faith in the resurrection of the body are indicated in Paul’s speech before the Sanhedrin (*Ac 23,1.6*), Paul’s speech to the crowd outside the Temple

takes on an introductory function for the group of topical speeches concerning Paul's imprisonment in Jerusalem.

1.23 *Ac 23*

Paul looked steadily at the Sanhedrin and began to speak ...

(...) *Ac 23, 1b*—The Speech of Paul before the Sanhedrin

² At this, the high priest Ananias ordered the men standing near to strike him on the mouth; ³ Paul turned to him and said: "God will strike you, you white-washed wall! Are you sitting there to try me in accordance with law, and yet, in defiance of law, order me to be struck?" ⁴ The people standing near said to Paul, "Do you know that you are insulting God's high priest?" ⁵ "I did not know, brothers, that it was the high priest," said Paul, "for scripture says 'Of the ruler of your people you should speak no ill.'" ⁶ Noticing that some of those present were Sadducees and others Pharisees, Paul called out in the Council ...

(...) *Ac 23, 6b*—The Speech of Paul before the Sanhedrin

⁷ [As soon as he said this], a dispute arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and there was a sharp division of opinion amongst those present. ⁸ (For Sadducees say there is no such thing as a resurrection, and that there is neither angel nor spirit, while Pharisees believe in both.) ⁹ So a great uproar ensued, and some of the Teachers of the Law belonging to the Pharisees' party stood up and hotly protested, "We find nothing whatever wrong in this man. Suppose a spirit did speak to him, or an angel ..." ¹⁰ The dispute was becoming so violent, that the commanding officer, fearing that Paul would be torn in pieces between them, ordered the Guard to go down and rescue him from them, and take him into the Fort. ¹¹ That night the Lord came and stood by Paul, and said, "Courage! You have borne witness for me in Jerusalem and you must bear witness in Rome also." ¹² In the morning some Jewish men combined together, and took an oath that they would not eat or drink until they had killed Paul. ¹³ There were more than forty in the plot; ¹⁴ and they went to the chief priests and the elders, and said, "We have taken a solemn oath not to touch food until we have killed Paul. ¹⁵ So we want you now, with the consent of the Council, to suggest to the commanding officer that he should bring Paul down before you, as though you intended to go more fully into his case; but, before he comes here, we will be ready to make away with him." ¹⁶ However, the son of Paul's sister, hearing of the plot, went to the Fort, and on being admitted, told Paul about it. ¹⁷ Paul called one of the Captains of the garrison and asked him to take the lad to the commanding officer, as he had something to tell him. ¹⁸ The captain went with the lad to the commanding officer, and said,

“The prisoner Paul called me and asked me to bring this lad to you, as he has something to tell you.” ¹⁹ The commanding officer took the lad by the hand, and, stepping aside, asked what it was he had to tell him. ²⁰ “Some men have agreed,” answered the lad, “to ask you to bring Paul down before the Council tomorrow, on the plea of your making further enquiry into his case.” ²¹ But do not let them persuade you, for more than forty of them are lying in wait for him, who have taken an oath that they will not eat or drink, until they have made away with him; and they are at this very moment in readiness, counting on your promise.” ²² The commanding officer then dismissed the lad, cautioning him not to mention to anybody that he had given him that information. ²³ Then he called two Captains, and ordered them to have two hundred soldiers ready to go to Caesarea, as well as seventy troopers and two hundred lancers, by nine o’clock that night, ²⁴ and to have horses ready for Paul to ride, so that they might take him safely to Felix, the Governor. ²⁵ He also wrote a letter [along these lines ...]

(...) Ac 23, 26–30—The Letter of Claudius Lysias

³¹ The soldiers, in accordance with their orders, took charge of Paul and conducted him by night to Antipatris; ³² and on the next day, leaving the troopers to go on with him, they returned to the Fort. ³³ On arriving at Caesarea, the troopers delivered the letter to the Governor, and brought Paul before him. ³⁴ As soon as Felix had read the letter, he enquired to what province Paul belonged, and, learning that he came from Cilicia, he said, ³⁵ “I will hear all you have to say as soon as your accusers have arrived.” And he ordered Paul to be kept under guard in Herod’s Government house.

Note about narrative: the narrative in chapter 23 concerns three events, first Paul’s interrogation before the Sanhedrin (Ac 23,1–11), which mixes an unfinished and interrupted speech of Paul with dialogue between Paul and the members of the Sanhedrin. Second the planned assassination of Paul (Ac 23,12–22), which does not contain any speech. Lastly Lysias’ decision to send Paul out of Jerusalem to Caesarea (Ac 23,23–35), which contains a speech shaped by Luke in the form of an official letter. The speech of Paul is necessary for the coherence and logic of the narrative of the first event, however the letter of Lysias can be omitted without any consequences for coherence and the logic of the narrative concerning the third event.

Note about the speeches: preliminary observation about the speeches shows that the speech of Paul is necessary not only for the coherence of the narrative, but it also develops the topic of “resurrection of the dead”, indicated in Paul’s speech to the crowd outside the Temple (Ac 22,1–21), suggesting that the

speech serves to move forward this part of the Paul's kerygma. Concerning the letter of Lysias, although it is not necessary for the coherence of the narrative of this section, it contains the first official statement specifying the issue of Paul's case (v. 29).

1.24 *Ac 24*

¹ Five days afterward the high priest Ananias came down with some of the elders and a barrister named Tertullus. They laid an information with the Governor against Paul; ² and, when the hearing came on, Tertullus began his speech for the prosecution.

(...) *Ac 24, 2–8—The Speech of Tertullus*

⁹ The Jewish crowd also joined in the attack and bore out his statements. ¹⁰ On a sign from the Governor, Paul made this reply:

(...) *Ac 24, 10–21—The Speech of Paul before Felix*

²² Felix, however, adjourned the case though he had a fairly accurate knowledge of all that concerned the Way—[with the promise ...]

(...) *Ac 24, 22—The Pronouncement of Felix*

²³ So he gave orders to the captain in charge of Paul to keep him in custody, but to relax the regulations, and not to prevent any of his personal friends from attending to his wants. ²⁴ Some days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and, sending for Paul, listened to what he had to say about faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁵ But, while Paul was speaking at length about righteousness, self-control, and the coming judgement, Felix became terrified, and interrupted him "Go for the present, but, when I find an opportunity, I will send for you again." ²⁶ He was hoping, too, for a bribe from Paul, and so he used to send for him frequently and talk with him. ²⁷ But, after the lapse of two years, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and, wishing to gain popularity with the Jewish leaders, he left Paul a prisoner.

Note about narrative: the narrative in chapter 24 concerns Paul's official trial before the procurator of Judea, Felix, and it contains the group of three topical speeches, which are the largest part of the narrative. However, the speeches are not necessary for the coherence and logic of the narrative, since even without the speeches the account concerning Paul's trial provides all the necessary information to offer a reliable description of the events. The narrative without speeches would be short, formal and focused on the unjust conduct of the procurator.

Note about the speeches: preliminary observation about the speeches shows that they create a group of topical speeches concerning Paul's trial, where the first speech (Ac 24,2–8) takes an introductory function by presenting the accusation against Paul. The second speech (Ac 24,10–21) takes on a progressive function by presenting Paul's reply to the accusation, and the third speech (Ac 24,22) acts as a conclusion since it presents the verdict of the judge.

1.25 *Ac 25*

¹ Three days after Festus had arrived in his province, he left Caesarea and went up to Jerusalem. ² There the chief priests and the leading men amongst the Jews laid an information before him against Paul, ³ and asked a favour of him, to Paul's injury—to have Paul brought to Jerusalem. All the while they were plotting to make away with him on the road. ⁴ But Festus answered that Paul was in prison at Caesarea, and that he himself would be leaving for that place shortly. ⁵ "So let the influential men amongst you," he said, "go down with me, and if there is anything amiss in the man, charge him formally with it." ⁶ After staying amongst them some eight or ten days, Festus went down to Caesarea. The next day he took his seat on the Bench, and ordered Paul to be brought before him. ⁷ On Paul's appearance, the Jewish leaders who had come down from Jerusalem surrounded him, and made many serious charges, which they failed to establish.

(...) *Ac 25, 8*—The Speech of Paul before Festus

⁹ But, as Festus wished to gain popularity with the Jews, he interrupted Paul with the question, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and be tried on these charges before me there?"

(...) *Ac 25, 10–11*—The Speech of Paul before Festus

¹² Festus, after conferring with his Council, answered, "You have appealed to the Emperor; to the Emperor you will go." ¹³ Some days later King Agrippa and Bernice came down to Caesarea, and paid a visit of congratulation to Festus; ¹⁴ and, as they were staying there for several days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king.

(...) *Ac 25, 14–21*—The First Speech of Festus

²² "I should like to hear this man myself," Agrippa said to Festus. "You will hear him tomorrow," Festus answered. ²³ So the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come in full state and had entered the Audience Chamber, with

the superior officers and the principal people of the city, by the order of Festus Paul was brought before them.

(...) Ac 25, 24–27—The Second Speech of Festus

Note about narrative: the narrative in chapter 25 concerns Paul's trial before the procurator Festus. The narrative contains mostly speeches, two of them belong to the group of topical speeches (Ac 25,8.10–11.14–21) and one speech (Ac 25,24–27) seems to take on a structural function. The narrative of chapter 25 without speeches would remain coherent and logical, however Paul's answer to Festus' proposal could be deduced from Festus' statement presented in verse 12. As in the case of the trial before Felix, the same pattern is used by Luke in creating the narrative concerning the trial as a short compact and holistic unit, where the basic and general information are given in the narrative part, but details, important statements and specifications are placed within the speeches.

Note about the speeches: preliminary observation about the speeches shows that all three speeches do not create a group of topical speeches, since the last speech in the chapter (Ac 25,24–27) although partly similar to the second speech (Ac 25,14–21) mainly refers to the Festus' problem (Ac 25,26–27) rather than to the case of Paul. It seems to us that the first speech in the chapter (Ac 25,8.10–11) takes on an introductory function in the group of the topical speeches (Ac 25,8.10–11.14–21, 26,2–29) by presenting the Paul's appeal to Caesar, which begins a new chapter in the narrative concerning his trial. The second speech in the group (Ac 25,14–21) is given by Festus and it takes the shape of a semi-official report concerning Paul's case, giving it a progressive function within the topical speeches. The speech, which becomes the conclusion in this group of topical speeches, is placed in chapter 26.

1.26 Ac 26

¹ Turning to Paul, Agrippa said, "You are at liberty to speak for yourself." Then Paul stretched out his hand and began his defence.

(...) Ac 26, 2–23—The Speech of Paul before the King Herod Agrippa II

²⁴ While Paul was making this defence, Festus called out loudly, "You are mad, Paul; your great learning is driving you mad."

(...) Ac 25, 25–27—The Speech of Paul before the King Herod Agrippa II

²⁸ But Agrippa said to Paul, "You are soon trying to make a Christian of me!"

(...) Ac 25, 29—The Speech of Paul before the King Herod Agrippa II

³⁰ Then the king rose, with the Governor and Bernice and those who had been sitting with them, ³¹ and, after retiring, discussed the case amongst themselves. “There is nothing,” they said, “deserving death or imprisonment in this man’s conduct”; ³² and, speaking to Festus, Agrippa added, “The man might have been discharged, if he had not appealed to the Emperor.”

Note about narrative: the narrative in chapter 26 concerns Paul’s speech before Herod Agrippa II. The account is built entirely on Paul’s speech (Ac 26,2–23.25–27.29) mixed with dialogues, without which the narrative of the chapter would become enigmatic, however it still would have a degree of coherence and logic, and a quite surprising message. Paul gives his apologetic speech, which the Roman official saw as evidence of madness, however by the Jewish king it was recognised as quite convincing, and led the king to pronounce Paul innocent.

Note about the speeches: preliminary observation about the speeches shows that the speech, which should be an apologetic response in his defence, in fact is a coherent kerygmatic unit. The result of the speech is indicated in Herod’s pronouncing Paul innocent of any crime, what gives the speech a conclusive function in the group of topical speeches concerning Paul’s trial before Festus.

1.27 *Ac 27*

¹ As it was decided that we were to sail to Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were put in charge of a captain of the Augustan Guard, named Julius. ² We went on board a ship from Adramyttium, which was on the point of sailing to the ports along the coast of Roman Asia, and put to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, went with us. ³ The next day we put in to Sidon, where Julius treated Paul in a friendly manner, and allowed him to go to see his friends and receive their hospitality. ⁴ Putting to sea again, we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the wind was against us; ⁵ and, after crossing the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we reached Myra in Lycia. ⁶ There the Roman officer found an Alexandrian ship on her way to Italy, and put us on board of her. ⁷ For several days our progress was slow, and it was only with difficulty that we arrived off Cnidus. As the wind was still unfavorable when we came off Cape Salmone, we sailed under the lee of Crete, ⁸ and with difficulty, by keeping close in shore, we reached a place called “Fair Havens”, near which was the town of Lasea. ⁹ This had taken a considerable time, and sailing was already dangerous, for the Fast was already over; and so Paul gave [this] warning.

(...) Ac 27, 10—The First Speech of Paul to the Voyagers

¹¹ The Roman officer, however, was more influenced by the captain and the owner than by what was said by Paul. ¹² And, as the harbour was not a suitable one to winter in, the majority were in favour of continuing the voyage, in hope of being able to reach Phoenix, and winter there. Phoenix was a Cretan harbour, open to the north-east and south-east. ¹³ So, when a light wind sprang up from the south, thinking that they had found their opportunity, they weighed anchor and kept along the coast of Crete, close in shore. ¹⁴ But shortly afterward a hurricane came down on us off the land—a north-easter, as it is called. ¹⁵ The ship was caught by it and was unable to keep her head to the wind, so we had to give way and let her drive before it. ¹⁶ Running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we only just managed to secure the ship's boat, ¹⁷ and, after hoisting it on board, the men frapped the ship. But, afraid of being driven on to the Syrtis Sands, they lowered the yard, and then drifted. ¹⁸ So violently were we tossed about by the storm, that the next day they began throwing the cargo overboard, ¹⁹ and, on the following day, threw out the ship's tackle with their own hands. ²⁰ As neither sun nor stars were visible for several days, and, as the gale still continued severe, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned.

(...) Ac 27, 21–26—The Second Speech of Paul to the Voyagers

²⁷ It was now the fourteenth night of the storm, and we were drifting about in the Adriatic Sea, when, about midnight, the sailors began to suspect that they were drawing near land. ²⁸ So they took soundings, and found twenty fathoms of water. After waiting a little, they took soundings again, and found fifteen fathoms. ²⁹ Then, as they were afraid of our being driven on some rocky coast, they let go four anchors from the stern, and longed for daylight. ³⁰ The sailors wanted to leave the ship, and had lowered the boat, on pretence of running out anchors from the bows, ³¹ when Paul said to the Roman officer and his men, "Unless the sailors remain on board, you cannot be saved." ³² So the soldiers cut the ropes which held the boat, and let her drift away. ³³ In the interval before daybreak Paul kept urging them all to take something to eat.

(...) Ac 27, 33–34—The Third Speech of Paul to the Voyagers

³⁵ [With these words] he took some bread, and, after saying the thanksgiving to God before them all, broke it in pieces, and began to eat; ³⁶ and the men all felt cheered and had something to eat themselves. ³⁷ There were about seventy-six of us on board, all told. ³⁸ After satisfying their hunger, they further lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea. ³⁹ When daylight came, they could not make out what land it was, but, observing a creek in which there was

a beach, they consulted as to whether they could run the ship safely into it.⁴⁰ Then they cast off, and abandoned the anchors, and at the same time unlash the gear of the steering oars, hoisted the foresail to the wind, and made for the beach.⁴¹ They got, however, into a kind of channel, and there ran the ship aground. The bows stuck fast and could not be moved, while the stern began breaking up under the strain.⁴² The advice of the soldiers was that the prisoners should be killed, so that none of them could swim away and make their escape.⁴³ But the Roman officer, anxious to save Paul, prevented their carrying out their intention, and ordered that those who could swim should be the first to jump into the sea and try to reach the shore;⁴⁴ and that the rest should follow, some on planks, and others on different pieces of the ship. In these various ways everyone managed to get safely ashore.

Note about narrative: the narrative in chapter 27 concerns Paul's voyage to Rome, and it contains three short topical speeches (in fact two speeches and one utterance). The narrative shows Luke's skills in creating a dynamic, vivid, detailed account shaped in a kind of semi-epic genre. The narrative without the speeches would stay coherent and logical, giving the speeches an independent character.

Note about the speeches: preliminary observation about the speeches shows that they make up a group of topical speeches, concerned entirely about Paul's contribution to solving problems that occurred during the voyage.

1.28 *Ac 28*

¹ When we were all safe, we found that the island was called Malta. ² The island's people showed us marked kindness, for they lit a fire and took us all under shelter, because it had come on to rain and was cold. ³ Paul had gathered a quantity of dry sticks and laid them on the fire, when a poisonous snake, driven out by the heat, fastened on his hand. ⁴ When the islanders saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "Evidently this man is a murderer, for though he has been saved from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live." ⁵ However, Paul shook the creature off into the fire and took no harm. ⁶ The islanders were expecting inflammation to set in, or that he would suddenly fall dead; but, after waiting for a long time, and seeing that there was nothing amiss with him, they changed their minds and said that he was a God. ⁷ In that region there was an estate belonging to the Governor of the island, whose name was Publius. He took us up to his house, and for three days entertained us most courteously. ⁸ It happened that the father of Publius was lying ill of fever and dysentery. So Paul went to see him; and, after praying, he placed his hands on him and cured him. ⁹ After this, all the people in the island who had

any illness came to Paul, and were cured.¹⁰ They also presented us with many gifts, and when we set sail they put supplies of necessities on board.¹¹ After three months, we set sail in a ship that had wintered in the island. She was an Alexandrian vessel, and had the Twin sons of Zeus for her figure-head.¹² We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days,¹³ and from there we worked to windward and so got to Rhegium. A day later a south wind sprang up and took us to Puteoli in two days.¹⁴ There we found some of the Lord's followers, and were urged to stay a week with them; after which we went on to Rome.¹⁵ The followers there had heard about us, and came out as far as the Market of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. At sight of them Paul thanked God and was much cheered.¹⁶ On our reaching Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, except for the soldier who was in charge of him.¹⁷ Three days after our arrival, Paul invited the leading Jews to meet him ...

(...) Ac 28, 17–20—The Speech of Paul to the Elders of the Jewish Community in Rome

(...) Ac 28, 21–22—The Speech of the Jewish Elders to Paul

²³ They [then fixed a day with him, and] came to the place where he was staying, in even larger numbers, when Paul proceeded to lay the subject before them. He bore his testimony to the kingdom of God, and tried to convince them about Jesus, by arguments drawn from the Law of Moses and from the prophets speaking from morning until evening.²⁴ Some were inclined to accept what he said; others, however, rejected it.

(...) Ac 28, 25–28—The speech of Paul to the Jews in Rome

³⁰ For two whole years Paul stayed in a house which he rented for himself, welcoming all who came to see him,³¹ proclaiming the kingdom of God, and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ, with perfect fearlessness, unhindered.

Note about narrative: the narrative in chapter 28 has two parts, first it relates the last part of Paul's voyage to Rome (Ac 28,1–16), and it does not contain any speeches. Then it relates the beginning of Paul's stay in Rome (Ac 25,17–28), and the account is almost entirely built on three topical speeches, which after some literary corrections of the verse 23 would not be necessary for the coherence and logic of the narrative of Ac 28.

Note about the speeches: preliminary observation about the speeches shows that the speeches form a group of three topical speeches concerning Paul's relations with the Jews in Rome. The first speech presents the Paul's apology and it takes on an introductory function by presenting Paul's self-introduction to

the Jews. The second speech contains the Jews' answer to Paul's apology, which did not really concern the Jews, who were much more interested in the teaching of the religious group he belonged to, which gives the speech a progressive function by developing the problem of the relations between Paul and the Jews in Rome. The third speech, which is a conclusion, outlines the result of Paul's encounter with the Jews, and his final statement that is in accordance with the general Lukan evaluation of Paul's missions.

2 Conclusion

After reading Acts without the speeches some general observations concerning the narrative alone and the connection between the narrative and the speeches can be given as the conclusion of this chapter.

Concerning the text of Acts without speeches, first we have to point to the fact that only 3 chapters (Ac 9, Ac 12, Ac 16) of 28 in all do not contain speeches. Instead, these chapters contain the device of dialogues, which replace the speeches in the narrative of these chapters. The device of dialogues appears also in chapters where the device of speech is used by Luke. Secondly, there are four chapters (Ac 7, Ac 13, Ac 15, Ac 26), in which the narrative entirely or largely contains the speeches, however they are not necessary for the narrative section to provide the reader with short, schematic, however in some cases laconic information. Thirdly, the majority of the chapters of Acts, even without the speeches, remains coherent and provides sufficient information (Ac 1–6, Ac 8, Ac 10–11, Ac 14, Ac 17–21, Ac 24–25, Ac 27–28). However, in many cases the meaning of the narrative of the chapter would be radically or entirely changed. Consequently, the reader would encounter a very different narrative from that known from Luke's version of the Acts of the Apostles. It seems that the Acts of the Apostles without the speeches suits better to the contemporary expectation of an historical work than the original text of the Acts of the Apostles. Fourthly, in our opinion, only in 2 chapters (Ac 22–23) the speeches are necessary for the coherence of the narrative, and without them the accounts would not make logical sense.

This short conclusion allows us to make a general statement that the function of the speeches is different from that of providing information necessary for a coherent narrative.

Analysis of the Topical Speeches

As we indicated earlier in the introduction, the speeches are one of three devices used by Luke in crafting the Acts of the Apostles. After separating the dialogues (the second device) from the text of Acts as presented in Chapter 1, the remaining material forms the chronological account (the third device), to which Luke refers in Lk 1,1–4. This, however, it is not the subject of the present study.¹ In this second chapter we shall to present the second part of the process of separating the speeches from the narrative in Acts by collecting the speeches without their narrative contexts.² Without these contexts most of the speeches show a thematic (or topical) relationship to each other and they create a group, which includes three speeches. But there is also a number of the speeches that, although they refer to the same period or events in Luke's narrative, do not relate directly to the topical speeches. We refer to these speeches as "structural speeches" and will examine them as a group in Chapter 3.

The topical speeches are divided into groups according to chronological, socio-geographical and topical keys. The general chronological scheme was established by Luke in the speech of Jesus (Ac 1,7–8). The socio-geographical key refers to the events with the same topic but with different locations or social contexts (e.g. the trials of Paul). The topical key refers to those cases where the socio-geographical context is the same but the topics differ.

1 In Jerusalem

Luke's narrative concerning the Jerusalem period (Ac 1,1–8,3) contains two groups of speeches determined by the topical key.³ The first group concerns the speeches, which concentrate on the mission activities of the Twelve in Jerusalem (Ac 2,14–40, 3,12–26, 4,8–12.19–20).⁴ The second group concerns the

1 Compared to the attention that has been given to the speeches in Acts, the dialogues and their function in the narrative structure of the whole have received very little attention.

2 For this reason we give the text of the speeches without their narrative contexts.

3 This is the structural speech of Ac 4,24–30 (the community prayer), which separates the period of controversy concerning the teaching from the conflict that led to persecution.

4 Dodd arguing in favour of using the sources (in this case the source of Aramaic-speaking Jerusalem Church) by the author of the Acts during creating these speeches of Peter based

conflict between the Twelve and the authorities of the Temple (Ac 5,29–32.35–39, 7,1–60) and its consequences.⁵

1.1 *The Beginning of the Mission in Jerusalem*

A The Pentecost Speech (Ac 2, 14–40)

The speech of Peter to the people gathered in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Ac 2,14–40) in fact contains two parts (Ac 2,14–36 and Ac 2,37–40), closely connected to each other but each with a specific message and having a different function.⁶ The first speech has an apologetic and kerygmatic character. The second speech is based on the first one, but it has only a kerygmatic character.⁷

The text of Ac 2, 14–40

¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: “People of Judea, and all you who are staying in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, listen to ¹⁵ These people are not drunk, as you suppose; for it is only the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ *In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.* ¹⁸ *Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.* ¹⁹ *And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist.* ²⁰ *The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day.* ²¹ *Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.* ²² People of Israel, listen to what I am saying. Jesus of Nazareth, a man whose mission from God to you was proved by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God showed amongst you

on a local kerygma, exposes thematic relation of these speeches. The relations concerns following topics: the promises were fulfilled; Jesus is the one, who fulfilled the promises, Jesus was resurrected and exalted; the Holy Spirit in the Church is the sign of Christ’s present power and glory; the return of Christ; the contents of the kerygma. All these topics are characteristic of the speeches attributed here to Peter. C.H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publisher, 1944), 7–35.

- 5 In the narrative concerning the Jerusalem period there are also structural speeches, which will be examined in Chapter 3 of this study.
- 6 A brief analysis of all the speeches by Peter in Acts is given in E. Schweitzer, “Concerning the Speeches in Acts,” in *Studies in Luke-Acts: Essays in Honor of Paul Schubert*, ed. L.E. Keck and J.L. Martyn (London: Abingdon Press, 1968), 208–216.
- 7 R.F. Zehnle, *Peter’s Pentecost Discourse: Tradition and Lukan Reinterpretation in Peter’s Speeches of Acts 2 and 3*, SBLMS 15 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1971), 27–28.

through him, as you yourselves know. ²³ This man in accordance with God's definite plan and with his previous knowledge, was put into your power, you nailed him to a cross and put him to death by the hands of lawless men. ²⁴ But God released him from the pangs of death and raised him to life, because it was impossible for death to retain its hold on him. ²⁵ For David says concerning him: *I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken;* ²⁶ *therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will live in hope.* ²⁷ *For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One experience corruption.* ²⁸ *You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.* ²⁹ Brothers, I can speak to you the more confidently about the patriarch David, because he is dead and buried, and his tomb is here amongst us to this very day. ³⁰ Because he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants upon his throne, ³¹ he referred to the resurrection of the Christ when he said that he had not been abandoned to Hades, nor had his body undergone corruption. ³² God raised this Jesus, and of that we all are witnesses. ³³ He has been exalted to the right hand of God, and has received from the Father the promised gift of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out that gift, as you yourselves now see and hear. ³⁴ For it was not David who went up into heaven; for he himself says: *The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand,"* ³⁵ *until I make your enemies your footstool.* ³⁶ So let the whole house of Israel know beyond all doubt, that God has made him both Lord and Christ; this Jesus whom you crucified." Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" ³⁸ Peter said to them "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all those now far away, who may be called by the Lord our God." ⁴⁰ Peter spoke to them for a long time using many other arguments and pleaded with them: "Save yourselves from this perverse generation."

A.1 *A Structural Analysis of the Speech*

This long and carefully constructed speech by Peter in fact contains two parts: Ac 2,14–36 is the main part, and Ac 2,37–40 is the second part. The first part of the speech can, be divided in three major sections. The first section (Ac 2,14–21) is an apology by the disciples, which serves in the construction of the whole speech as an opportunity to proclaim the gospel concerning Jesus of Nazareth. A large part of this section is a quotation from the Book of Joel (Joel 3,1–5), but

into which Luke has purposely introduced some changes.⁸ The second section is an apology of Jesus of Nazareth (Ac 2,22–32), which contains a short account of Jesus' ministry (vv. 22–23) and a very extensive argument for Jesus' resurrection (vv. 24–32).⁹ This section contains quotations from Ps 16,8–18 (in Ac 2,25–28), Ps 132,11 (in Ac 2,31) and Ps 110,1 (in Ac 2,34–35). In the fragment concerning the resurrection of Jesus, Luke presents a quotation from the LXX (Ps 16,8–11, Û 17,8–11), which argues for resurrection from death (vv. 24–28). Luke then argues that Ps 16,8–11 applies to Jesus and not to David (vv. 29–31).¹⁰ The third section (Ac 2,33–36) concerns the glorification of Jesus by God in order to show that He is the Lord and the Messiah. In this section a quotation from Ps 110,1 is used in order to emphasise that as well as the resurrection, the glorification does not apply to David but to Jesus. The last verse of the speech (v. 36) is the conclusion to which whole speech is directed. The first part of the speech provoked a reaction from the audience (v. 37), and this becomes the basis for the second part of the speech (Ac 2,37–40), which is an answer to the audience's question, showing them the way they can share in the Promise of God.

From a rhetorical point of view, in the first part of the speech Peter uses forensic rhetoric, which starts with a defence against an accusation by the opponents, but then quickly turns into an attack on them. In the first part of the speech (Ac 2,14–36), the defence concerns the charge of drunkenness (Ac 2,14–21) and the attack concerns responsibility of some Jews for the crucifixion of Jesus (Ac 2,22–36). In the second part of the speech (Ac 2,37–40) Paul uses deliberative rhetoric in order to instruct the audience about the action required in order to change from being opponents of Jesus to becoming his followers.¹¹

A.2 *The Meaning of the Speech*

The speeches contain many important theological teachings. Starting with the unit Ac 2,14–21, the most important theological teaching (concerning eschatology) is that from the events at Pentecost the eschatological time, according to God's promise, has begun (v. 17) and it has a public character, which is attested by reception of the Holy Spirit by the apostles and the conviction that all, who

8 Concerning the changes, Luke used "*in the last day*" instead of "*after this days*" (LXX—Joel 3,1–5), which gives the Pentecost's event eschatological context. He also added "*God says*" before the phrase "*I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh*", which indicates that the event is fulfilment of God's promise. L.T. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 49; G.S. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 1, 877–886.

9 This apology contains some elements of accusation against the Jews who reject Jesus.

10 D. Juwł, "Social Dimensions of Exegesis: The Use of Ps 16 in Acts 2," *CBQ* 43 (1981): 543–556.

11 Soards, *The Speeches in the Acts*, 31.

follow Jesus will receive the same gift (vv. 14.39).¹² This eschatological time will end with coming of the Lord and salvation of those, who believe in His name (Ac 2,20–21).¹³ In the second unit (Ac 2,22–32) there are several Christological teachings. Following the order of Luke's presentation, the first teaching concerns the history of Jesus of Nazareth (vv. 22–24) and it makes very clear that everything that happened to Jesus of Nazareth was a part of God's plan (v. 23a).¹⁴ It is important to note that just after the statement concerning God's will Luke indicates the way in which the will of God was fulfilled (vv. 23b, 36). However, the most important Christological topic of the unit concerns the fact that God raised Jesus (vv. 24.32). The topic is a subject of close argument continuing until the end of the unit (vv. 24b–31). The argument is based on Christological interpretation of the LXX texts (Ps 16,8–11). The last unit (vv. 33–36) contains teaching concerning Jesus' glorification on the right-hand of God (v. 33a) with an argument based on Ps 110,1. The unit contains another very interesting teaching; Jesus has received from God the promised gift of the Holy Spirit and He shared it with those who believe in Him (v. 33b).¹⁵ In this way the speech of Peter forms a circle, starting with the event of Pentecost in vv. 14–15 and concluding with an indication of the source of the event (v. 33).¹⁶ Between

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- 12 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 1, 881–882; B. Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic* (London: SCM, 1961), 361.
 - 13 Since Ac 2,36 refers to Jesus as the Lord, mention of the day of the Lord in Ac 2,20 can be read as an indication by Luke of the Christian view on the Parousia, which is often called "the day of Lord Jesus" (1 Cor 5,5, 2 Cor 1,14) or "the day of the Lord" (1 Thess 5,2, 2 Thess 2,2). Keener, *Acts*, vol. 1, 919–923.
 - 14 Bauckham recognises verses 22–24 and verses 32–33 as one of the major kerygma summaries. R. Bauckham, "Kerygmatic Summary in the Speeches of Acts," in *History Literature, and Society in the Book of Acts*, ed. B. Witherington III (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2007), 213. The kerygma contains the following teachings: Jesus of Nazareth (historical aspect) was attested by God (where the attestation refers to the Messiah dignity of Jesus, and the way of attesting were Jesus' deeds, which human cannot perform); everything concerning Jesus occurred according *τῇ ὀρισμένῃ βουλῇ καὶ προγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ ἔκδοτον*—*to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God* (God's salvation plan); Jesus the Messiah was rejected by Israel (in general) through the decision of the Temple authorities (the lawless men); Jesus was resurrected by God (v. 24); Jesus was glorified (v. 33).
 - 15 C.A. Evans, "The Prophetic Setting of the Pentecost Sermon," *ZNW* 74 (1983): 148–150.
 - 16 The source of the event at Pentecost is Jesus, the Messiah, who received the Holy Spirit (Lk 3,21) in order to baptise with the Holy Spirit those, who believe in Him (Lk 3,16). In this way the glorified Jesus is still present in the Church and ruling the church by the Holy Spirit. Turner interpreted this in way of divine Christology, where Jesus is "Lord of the Spirit" (M. Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 277–278), however as Keener

those two points of Peter's speech (verse 16 and verse 33), there is a short but extremely precise Christological teaching, which leads to the conclusion presented in verse 36 that God has made Jesus the Lord and the Messiah.¹⁷

The first part of the Peter's speech left a deep impact in hearts of some Jews, who asked for instruction concerning on how to change their disadvantaged condition (Ac 2,37). The interrupting question of the hearers came after Peter's summary statement concerning Jesus as the Lord and the Messiah.¹⁸ The second part of the speech contains a kind of catechetical instruction for those who want become believers in Jesus.

First, they must repent as part of the process of conversion, which here means to come to believe in Jesus as the Messiah. Because it is a speech to Jews, the similarity to John the Baptist's call for repentance (Lk 3,3), in order that sins be forgiven, is striking.¹⁹ According to Peter, they have to recognise that God appointed Jesus as the king (Messiah). Second, they must be baptised in the name of Jesus, which here means a conversion in the sense of faith in Jesus (not in sense of changing religion). In Peter's speech baptism is connected with repentance, and it is the next step after coming to believe in Jesus, and it includes the one who is baptised in the community of those whose sins were forgiven. Finally they will receive the Holy Spirit, that is to say, be baptised with the Holy Spirit (Ac 2,37–38). This on the one hand indicates that as the member of the messianic community they will share in the gifts promised by God to their fathers.²⁰ The promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit is addressed to all Jews in all times, but it is not limited only to them, because Luke in Peter's speech expands it also to "*all those who are far away*", what indicates the Gentiles called by God to believe in Jesus (Ac 2,39).²¹ This is necessary for

suggests, Luke here presents Jesus as the one whom "God has delegated to provide the gift of the Spirit" (Keener, *Acts*, vol. 1, 957–959).

17 Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic*, 46.

18 Fitzmyer takes the term "Lord" in a religious sense (as is attested by use of the term in Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic sources). J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles* (New Haven—London: Yale University Press, 1998), 260. The term Messiah emphasises Jesus' dignity as the king from the David's line, who is the rightful ruler. L.R. Brawley, "The Spirit, the Power, and the Commonwealth in Acts," *BibTh* 37 (1999): 268–275.

19 John the Baptist proclaimed a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins (Lk 3,3). Peter proclaims a repentance, which will lead to baptism in the name of Jesus and will bring two graces, forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

20 In broad sense it refers to prophetic empowerment, as Ac 2,17–21 suggests, but most probably it is not limited only to this.

21 Zehnle, *Peter's Pentecost Discourse*, 34; M.D. Hamm, "Acts 3:12–26: Peter's Speech and the Healing of the Man Born lame," *PRSt* 11 (1984): 199–217.

those, who want to save themselves from the judgment upon the generation, which witnessed Jesus' deeds but refused to recognise Him as the Lord and Messiah. They must separate themselves from that generation (τῆς γενεᾶς τῆς σκολιᾶς ταύτης), they have to join the "remnant", who will be saved by faith in Jesus (Ac 2,20–21). The use of the imperative aorist σώθητε indicates the unconditional necessity of such action (Ac 2,40).²²

A.3 *The Function of the Speech*

In Luke's narrative the speech of Peter is the first public speech—it is addressed to all Jews and not only to believers in Jesus—and official—Peter is acting as a head of the group—in his declaration of faith in Jesus as the Messiah (v. 36).²³ The declaration is addressed to "the whole House of Israel".²⁴ Taking into consideration these factors as well as the conclusion of the speech (v. 36), the declaration can be understood as a basic early Christian creed containing Christology (Ac 2,22–24,32–33,36) and pneumatology (Ac 2,16–21,33,38–39). Luke purposely places the declaration at the beginning of his narrative concerning the missionary activities of the apostles and their followers in Jerusalem, in order to present the basis of the apostolic *kerygma* proclaimed to Jews.

The fact that the first part of the speech ends with an address to "the whole House of Israel" directly indicates that the apostle addressed the speech to Jews, both the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Jews from the Diaspora (cf. also Ac 2,14). This interpretation is supported by two terms "Lord" and "Messiah" used by Luke in order to define the early Judaeo-Christian understanding of Jesus.²⁵

22 Referents to the "crooked generation" reminds the expression "evil generation" in Deut 1,35 concerning the Jews, who left Egypt but refused to obey God, the source of their freedom. The term σώθητε in verse 40 refers to the term σωθήσεται in verse 21, which is part of quotation from the Book of Joel. F.F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles. Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester: Eerdmans, 1990), 130–131.

23 It is placed in the context of the historical event. A.J.M. Wedderburn, "Traditions and Redaction in Acts 2,1–13," *JSNT* 55 (1994): 27–54.

24 The expression "the whole House of Israel" is used at the end of the speech, whereas at the beginning of the speech the expression used is: "Men of Judaea, and all you who live in Jerusalem". This indicates that Luke's narrative starts from the particular situation (vv. 14–15) and successively develops to the point where it takes the shape of being universal statement (v. 36). Scholars are arguing if the expressions ἄνδρες Ἰουδαῖοι—*men of Judea* and κατοικοῦντες Ἱερουσαλὴμ—all who dwell in Jerusalem should be interpreted in strict androcentric manner. Concerning the discussion, see Keener, *Acts*, vol. 1, 867–869.

25 Peter, as the head of those Jews who believe in Jesus, publicly confesses that he believes that Jesus, raised by God, is Lord and Messiah. Those who thought that the death of Jesus

The second part of the speech indicates the action necessary for those who were convinced by Peter's speech, who changed their minds and wished to be saved (Ac 2,37). Their question serves to introduce Peter's instruction showing the way in which those who had rejected Jesus during His ministry can now be saved. According to the Lukan Peter this process, which starts with repentance and will end with receiving the Holy Spirit that is the sign of fulfilment of God's promise. At this point, Luke introduces a new element in his Christology and pneumatology, including also the Gentiles (Ac 2,21) as object of God's promise.²⁶ Although the speech is addressed to Jews, at the end it indicates that God's promise (in Luke's narrative concept) takes a universal character, and applies also to non-Jews, as the ensuing narrative in Acts will show (Ac 11,17).

B The Speech in Portico of Solomon (Ac 3, 12–26)

After the Pentecost event, the Twelve started their mission in Jerusalem. An unexpected miracle at the gate of the Temple forced Peter to give a speech, which contains a presentation of Jesus as being the fulfilment of God's promises.²⁷ Despite many similarities between the speech on Pentecost and the speech in the Temple, they differ radically in aim and in their approach to the material.²⁸ While the Pentecost speech mostly concentrates on arguments for the resurrection of Jesus, the Temple speech presents much more advanced Christology and eschatology.²⁹

The text of Ac 3, 12–26

¹² On seeing this, Peter said to the people, "People of Israel, why are you surprised at this? And why do you stare at us, as though we, by power or piety of our own, had made him walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac,

would end the movement had to face the fact that the movement was on the offensive from the beginning. The term Messiah is used in sermons to Israel (Ac 2,36, 3,18–20, 5,43, 8,5, 9,22, 17,2–3, 18,5,28, 26,22–23), when it is usually omitted in sermons to Gentiles.

²⁶ Soards, *The Speeches in the Acts*, 38.

²⁷ Hellenistic parallels to Ac 3–4 are given in P.W. van der Horst, "Hellenistic Parallels to Acts (Chapters 3 and 4)," *JSNT* 35 (1989): 37–46.

²⁸ On the one hand similarities between these two speeches (Ac 2,14–40, 3,12–26) and on the other hand differences between them have led some scholars to make the supposition that there is primitive source material, which served as the basis for writing the speeches. Zehnle, *Peter's Pentecost Discourse*, 71–94. Due to the lack of evidence, the suggestion stays highly hypothetical. In our opinion the reason for the similarities and differences in both speeches is Luke's approach to presenting in the speeches the theological themes that gradually develop within the group of the three topical speeches. For more explanation concerning the topical speeches see chapter 4 of the present study.

²⁹ For a comparison of the speeches, see Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 176–178.

and Jacob, the God of our ancestors, has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him.¹⁴ But you disowned the holy and righteous one, and asked for the release of a murderer!¹⁵ The founder of the life you put to death! But God raised him from the dead. To this we are witnesses.¹⁶ And it is by faith in the name of Jesus that this man, whom you all see and know, has been made strong. It is the faith inspired by Jesus that has made this complete cure of the man, in the presence of all of you.¹⁷ But now, brethren, I know that you acted as you did from ignorance, and your rulers also.¹⁸ In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer.¹⁹ Therefore, repent and turn so that your sins may be wiped away,²⁰ that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send appointed for you the Christ, the Jesus,²¹ whom heaven must receive until the time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from the very first.²² Moses himself said: *The Lord your God will raise up for you from your own people a prophet like me. You must listen to whatever he tells you.*²³ *And it will be that everyone who does not listen to that prophet will be utterly rooted out of the people.*²⁴ All the prophets from Samuel onwards, and all their successors proclaimed and told of these days.²⁵ You yourselves are the heirs of the prophets, and heirs of the covenant, which God made with your ancestors, when he said to Abraham: *In your descendants will all the families of the earth be blessed.*²⁶ It was for you in the first place that God raised up his servant and sent him to bless you by turning each one of you from his wicked ways.

B.1 *The Structural Analysis of the Speech*

Peter gives the speech in the Jerusalem Temple. The occasion for the speech is a miracle, the healing of the crippled man, which occurred in front of the Temple gate (Ac 3,1–8). The miracle aroused the wonder of the crowd gathered in the Temple, concerning the nature of the healing. Peter starts the speech with a rhetorical question, based on the conviction that the power to heal comes only from God and not from humans (Ac 3,12). Peter gives the answer to the question in v. 16, pointing to the name of Jesus as the source of the power to heal. However, before this answer is given, a necessary preparation has been offered in vv. 13–15. Basically, these verses contain an accusation against the Jews who *παρεδώκατε καὶ ἡρνήσασθε*—*handed over and then disowned* (v. 13), *ἡρνήσασθε*—*denied* (v. 14), *ἀπεκτείνετε*—*killed* (v. 15) Jesus, and the titles given to Jesus: *τὸν παῖδα αὐτοῦ*—*his servant* (v. 13), *τὸν ἅγιον καὶ δίκαιον*—*the holy and righteous one* (v. 14), *ἄρχηγὸν τῆς ζωῆς*—*the founder of life* (v. 15). The gradual presentation of the Jews' guilt is striking, and this is followed by a gradual

presentation of Jesus' titles. In the second part of the section (vv. 17–18), Peter gives a kind of apology on behalf of the Jews, whose ignorance in acting was somehow a part of God's salvific plan (v. 18). Now Peter calls them to conversion (v. 19). This part of the speech is *forensic rhetoric*, moving from defence (vv. 11–12) to attack (vv. 13–18).

The second section of the speech (vv. 19–26) contains two parts (vv. 19–21, 22–25), which lead to the conclusion of the speech (v. 26). The first part of this section contains a message of good news addressed by Peter to the Jews, who are encouraged to repent and to return to God (v. 19), in order to receive forgiveness of sins, and to be graced with a time of repose (v. 20) and finally to receive Jesus the Messiah, who will be sent for them at the end of time (vv. 20–21). This part contains Luke's account of Peter's kerygma addressed to the Jews. The second part (vv. 22–26) contains an argument based on the words from the Old Testament, which are offered as proving that the kerygma (vv. 19–21) is not some private speculation, but is a true understanding and interpretation of the prophecies concerning the eschatological times.

The concluding verse (v. 26) clearly indicates that the event of Jesus (His death, resurrection and second coming) is an act of God directly addressed to the Jews. This second section contains *deliberative rhetoric*, which attempts to convince the Jews that the event of Jesus was addressed to them.

After the speech, Luke placed a short narrative pointing to two effects of the speech. The positive effect was that five thousand Jews converted (Ac 4,1), while the negative effect of the speech was that Peter and John were arrested by the priests of the temple and the Sadducees (Ac 4,1–3).

B.2 *The Meaning of the Speech*

The first part of the speech (Ac 3,12–16) has an apologetic character and it concerns Jesus. It starts with the healing of the man crippled from birth (Ac 3,2–10) that naturally aroused the wonder of the crowd, which gathered around Peter and John (Ac 3,11). Peter took the opportunity and started his speech with two rhetorical questions, which clearly insist that the source of healing is neither himself nor John (Ac 3,12). Before he indicates the source of the healing in v. 16, he offers some necessary preliminary remarks referring to Jews' attitude towards Jesus as well as to titles given to Jesus. First, Peter says that the God of Israel chose Jesus as His servant, but God's people not only rejected Jesus, but they also delivered Him up to Romans and they denied Him before Pilate (Ac 3,13).³⁰ Indirectly Peter shows that the Jews were acting against God, when

30 The phrase "*The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob*" has its roots in Ex 3,6 and it refers to the God of the Jews, who was worshiped by their ancestors. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 139.

they rejected Jesus, and against Jewish customs, when they delivered Jesus into the hands of the Gentiles.³¹ Their guilt is underlined by mentioning that Pilate tried to release Him, but they chose the murderer instead of Jesus, the Holy and Righteous One (Ac 3,14).³² In this way, God's nation put to death τὸν δὲ ἀρχηγὸν τῆς ζωῆς—the *founder of life*, but it was God who raised Him from death (Ac 3,15), and by this act He manifested the injustice of the nation's decision.³³ Peter and John are witnesses to this (Ac 3,15).³⁴ Finally, Peter's answer to the questions presented in verse 13, pointing to Jesus' name as the source of healing power (objective element) and to faith (subjective element) as the way the miracle occurred.³⁵ By the power of Peter's faith in the name of Jesus, which he received from Jesus himself, the man's health was restored (Ac 3,15).³⁶ What Peter says is that Jesus is the source of faith, and faith in the name of Jesus is the source of the healing power. This kerygmatic statement is the central point of the teaching in the first part of the speech.

The second part of the speech offers a hermeneutical evaluation of the wrongdoing of the nation, which is undertaken in an eschatological perspective. First, Peter shows his understanding of the reason for the nation's action, which was ignorance (Ac 3,17). Peter mentions ignorance of the nation and the ignorance of their leaders, which in turn points to the nature of their ignorance; Ac 13,27 the leaders are accused of knowing neither Jesus nor the Scripture. This ignorance mitigates the guilt of the nation, but it does not do so in respect of the leaders, who are supposed to recognise Jesus based on the

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- 31 F.J. Matera, "The Responsibility for the Death of Jesus according to the Acts of the Apostles," *JSTT* 39 (1990): 77–93.
 - 32 Information concerning Jesus' rejection and his trial concerns more details than in the Speech Ac 2,14–40, which are included in order to present more radically the responsibility of the Jews. D.J.H. Harrington, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 67.
 - 33 For the possible understanding and translation of the term ἀρχηγός, see G.S. Keener, *Acts. An Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 1096–1099.
 - 34 The apostles are witness to the wrong decision of the Jews, which caused Jesus' execution, and to the justice of God, who raised Jesus from death (similar Ac 2,32, 5,32, 10,39). Their witness is attested to by the miracle, which had its source in Jesus, the foundation of life (Ac 3,16). In fact, according to Luke's narration, Peter and John act not only as the witnesses but also as the accusers, however the second attitude hasn't any connection to damnation, but its aim is a call for recognition of the hearers' guilt and their repentance.
 - 35 Here it is not clear if the Lukan Peter is speaking about the faith of the lame man or the faith of Peter and John. Since there are not references in the text to the faith of the lame man, the second possibility is preferred. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 182.
 - 36 Bauckham recognises vv. 13–15 as the one of the major kerygmatic summaries ("Kerygmatic Summary in the Speeches of Acts," 213).

Scriptures.³⁷ Because of the ignorance of the nation (including the leaders), Jesus was rejected and killed, and in this way the prophecies of all prophets concerning the suffering of Messiah was fulfilled, according to the God's plan (Ac 3,18).³⁸ Peter applies the prophecies to the suffering of Jesus, which is explicitly declared in Ac 3,20, where Jesus is called the Messiah.³⁹ However, the time of ignorance is over, and the nation now knows the truth proclaimed by Peter, what gives the ground for Peter's call to the Jews to change their way of thinking and conduct, in order that their sins can be forgiven by God (Ac 3,19). Indirectly, Peter evaluates the present situation of Jews as those, who turned away from God, and because of that their sins are not yet forgiven.⁴⁰ From the Lukan Peter's perspective the act of turning away from God was the rejection of Jesus, and because of that God's forgiveness of human sins through Jesus' sacrifice does not apply to them. They have to convert (ἐπιστρέφω) to God (Ac 9,35, 11,21, 15,19, 26,18). It is seen as the necessary condition, by which the time of renewal by God can be made possible, when He sends the Messiah, who is Jesus, the one who has been appointed by God (Ac 3,20).⁴¹ The kerygma that Jesus is the Messiah was already presented in Ac 2,36, however here it is not only repeated but it is presented in an eschatological context, which indicates two important Luke's theological themes. The act of the Jews' conversion to God is seen as the eschatological event (the first thought), which is understood as the potentially imminent end and not as a far distant and undefined future one (the second thought).⁴² Jesus, the Messiah, is now in heaven

37 About ignorance as a mitigating factor in the Bible see Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1102–1114.

38 The expression "*all prophets*" is rhetorical hyperbole, since not all prophets spoke about a suffering Messiah. Luke refers to Isaiah (Is 52,13–53,12) and possibly to other prophets (Jer 11,19, Zech 12,10, 13,7).

39 Since the common conviction concerning the Davidic Messiah rather excluded the possibility of his suffering, the Lukan Peter refers to the Scripture, which attest that Jesus, who suffered and died, can be called Messiah. The Jewish expectation concerning the Messiah differed from Scripture's prophecies and God's plan, caused their ignorance, which became the way in which God fulfilled the prophecy. However, it does not serve as an excuse for the nation's responsibility. Concerning the Messiah, see Keener, *Acts*, vol. 1, 964–970.

40 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 184.

41 Zerwick understands προχειρίζομαι in a temporal sense as *already appointed*. M. Zerwick and M. Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1996), 358–359.

42 A.E. Nielsen, "The Purpose of the Lukan Writings with Particular Reference to Eschatology," in *Luke-Acts: Scandinavian Perspectives*, ed. P. Luomanen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991), PFES 54, 76–93. Use of ἀποστείλῃ—*may send* (subjunctive aorist) indicates the possibility of the event.

and he will remain there until χρόνων ἀποκαταστάσεως—the *time of restoration*, which was promised by God through the words of prophets (Ac 3,21).⁴³ As an argument Peter quotes Deut 18,15,18–19 and Lev 23,29, according to which the nation should obey the words of the prophet (in Peter's speech, Jesus, the Messiah), and those who do not accept the prophet sent by God will be excluded from the nation (Ac 3,22–23). The prophets since the time of Samuel (1 Sam 2,10, 12,3–5, 12,22, 16,1–13, 2 Sam 3,18) proclaimed the Messiah's coming, thus making the teaching concerning the hope of the "time of restoration" an integral part of Jewish tradition (Ac 3,24). The Jews to whom Peter addresses the speech are descendants of the prophets, which makes them to be the addressees of the prophets' words. They are all the heirs of the covenant, which God made with Abraham due to his faith (Ac 3,25). Mention of the covenant with Abraham has a special significance, since it was the covenant built on the faith of Abraham (which contrasts with the Jews' lack of faith in God's servant Jesus), and it included the blessing not only to those, who will obey the covenant (Deut 28,2–14), but through the chosen nation also all nations. Although the nation is the subject of the covenant blessing, their present situation (the rejection of the Messiah) placed them outside the blessing of the covenant. What is emphasised in v. 25 is again clearly underlined in v. 26, where Peter says that the raising up of Jesus was an act addressed in the first place to the Jews in order to turn them from their way.⁴⁴ The part of Jesus' mission as the Messiah was to turn Israel back to God, by the teaching and deeds, which were supposed to help them recognise their wrongdoings towards God.⁴⁵

The main point of the second part of the speech is to present Jesus as the Messiah, who although rejected by the Jews was first of all sent to them, in

43 Luke used here the term ἀποκατάστασις in reference to the time of salvation, and not in reference to a time of socio-political restoration. H. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 29. It is possible that the phrase *the time of restoration* refers to a Jewish turn to God. For a different interpretation, see Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1109–1112.

44 The term ἀνίστημι—*raised up* should be understood in the same way as in verse 22, as referring to the establishment of Jesus as the Messiah rather than Jesus' resurrection. For a different interpretation, see Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 291–292. The phrase "*in the first place*" indicates also the others, whom most probably are Gentiles. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 71.

45 The word order in the Greek text of v. 26 is difficult. Problematic is the understanding of the phrase "*and sent him to bless you as every one of you turns from his wicked ways*". Does the blessing refer to the kerygma of the disciples of Jesus (Peterson) or to the Holy Spirits' gift (Johnson)? Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 70–71; D.G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids—Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009), 184–185. It seems preferable to think that the blessing of Jesus refers to His teaching and deeds.

order that they may turn from their sins and turn again to God. Without turning to God, it is impossible to accept Jesus as the Messiah, which is a necessary act in order to receive His blessing by which one can turn from his own wrongdoing. The temporary rejection of Jesus can be changed if they turn to God, and because of that those who rejected the Messiah now may receive a second chance and recognise Him at the time of His second coming.

B.3 *The Function of the Speech*

The speech is given in Solomon's Portico of the Temple, what indicates that the addressees of the speech are the Jews, believers alongside with the authorities of the Temple (Ac 3,11). The speech concerns matters strictly related to the relationship between Jesus, the Messiah and those Jews, who rejected Him. It contains accusations against the Jews (Ac 3,13–14) with an explicit indication of the authorities (Ac 3,17), but without their condemnation (Ac 3,17–18). The event of Jesus was first addressed to Jews, of whom some (the followers of Jesus) have accepted him and some have not done so (Ac 3,26).⁴⁶ The latter groups of Jews remain in a disadvantaged position and they are described as those, who turn from God (Ac 3,19), because God sent Jesus, the Messiah, in order that they may turn from sin and turn to Him. All of these indicate that the main aim of the speech is to show the leader of the Twelve, in the central place of Judaism, proclaiming to the Jews that their fate depends on their recognition of Jesus as the Messiah. In Luke's presentation, Peter is convinced that the event of Jesus is a part of God's salvation plan concerning the Jews (Ac 3,26).

By setting the speech in the Temple, Luke indicates that those Jews, who believed in Jesus as the Messiah, made their first mission attempt towards their fellow citizens (including the Temple authorities) with the full conviction that it is the will of God (Ac 3,15). However, from Luke's perspective this is only the second level and not the final stage of the mission activities undertaken by the followers of Jesus towards inhabitancies of Jerusalem. The final stage of developing the idea of Jesus as the Messiah, takes place in the speech of Peter before the Sanhedrin, in which Luke chooses to show the result of the speech in the Solomon's Portico.

Compared with the Pentecost speech, the speech in Solomon's Portico takes on a progressive character, developing some ideas already presented in Peter's first speech (Jesus the Messiah, Jesus the Lord, resurrection of Jesus) and raising new ideas (ignorance as the reason for wrongdoing, eschatological context of accepting Jesus as the Messiah by the Jews, Jesus in heaven, the act of Jesus' rejection as the act of turning from God, Jesus the Messiah first sent to the

46 J.A. Robinson, "The Most Primitive Christology of All?" *JTS* 7 (1956): 177–189.

Jews). The new ideas concentrate almost exclusively on relationship between the Jews and God, after the rejection by some Jews Jesus as the Messiah. The act of rejection puts them in a disadvantaged position, because they turn from God, and they still stay in their sins.⁴⁷ Their present status can be changed only in the future (rather near than far) when they accept Jesus as the Messiah. This necessity is clearly indicated in the Peter's third speech (Ac 4,8–12.19–20), which will develop the ideas presented in Peter's previous speeches (Ac 2,14–40, 3,12–26) into their conclusion.

C The First Speech of Peter before the Sanhedrin (Ac 4, 8–12. 19–20)
After the speech at Pentecost (Ac 2,14–40) and the speech at the Temple (Ac 3,12–26), Luke places in his narrative another speech that, like the two speeches before, focuses on teaching about Jesus the Messiah. However, Peter's speech before the rulers of the nation and the elders has rather a kerygmatic than a deliberative character, what gives the speech a special function in the narrative of Acts. Although it is short and divided into two parts, the speech contains an important message concerning the way the Judeo-Christian identity began to take its own shape.

The text of Ac 4, 8–12. 19–20

⁸ Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹ if we are questioned today concerning a good deed done to a helpless man, and are asked in what way this man has been healed, ¹⁰ be it be known to you all and all the people of Israel, that it is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified and whom God raised from the dead that this man is standing before you cured. ¹¹ He is the stone which was rejected by you builders, but which has become the head of the corner. ¹² And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given to people by which we must be saved.

¹⁹ But Peter and John replied, "Whether it is right, in the sight of God, to listen to you rather than to God; judge for yourselves. ²⁰ We cannot help speaking of what we have seen and heard.

47 It seems to us that this aspect of Peter's speech (Ac 3,12–26) reflects Luke's theological views (especially imminent eschatology) and his post-factum evaluation of situation in which Jews, who rejected Jesus as the Messiah found themselves, seen from the Christian perspective, rather Peter's own thoughts.

C.1 *The Structural Analysis of the Speech*

A direct reason for giving the speech is an interrogation of Peter and John before the rulers of the people and elders (the Sanhedrin) concerning the source of the healing power, they had demonstrated (Ac 4,7). The speech has two parts. The first part (Ac 4,8b–12) has a juridical character and it mostly contains the basic elements of the teaching presented in Ac 2,14–36.37–39, 3,12–26.⁴⁸ However, here the message is direct, short, and straightforward. It starts with typical rhetorical opening, which indicates the addressees, and here serves as *captatio benevolentiae*. The speech is addressed directly to the rulers of people and elders (Ac 4,8b), however the teaching concerns the whole of Israel (Ac 4,10). First, Peter makes a somewhat ironical remark referring to the fact that the reason for the interrogation is a good deed, the healing of the crippled man (Ac 4,9).⁴⁹ He gives the answer to this rhetorical question, declaring that the source of healing power is Jesus the Messiah, who was rejected by the rulers of the nation and elders, but was justified by God, who raised him from the dead (Ac 4,10–11). This truth must be proclaimed to the rulers and elders as well as to whole of Israel (Ac 4,10).⁵⁰ Peter's answer, which takes an offensive rather than a defensive form, is followed by an accusation of the authorities (ὃν ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε together with v. 11, which is a quotation of LXX Ps 117,22),⁵¹ and an indication of the dignities received by Jesus from God (ὃν ὁ θεὸς ἡγείρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν together with v. 12). The first part of the speech ends with the statement that Jesus is the only Saviour and there is none other who can save Israel (Ac 4,12).⁵²

The reason for the second part of the speech (Ac 4,19–20) differs from the first part. Here Peter gives his answer to the prohibition, which the rulers of the nation and elders tried to impose on him and John (Ac 4,18). The prohibition concerns proclaiming the name of Jesus in the way Peter presented it to the elders. The second part of the speech contains Peter's refusal to obey the

48 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1143.

49 The result of their benefaction was generally viewed as virtue, which should be subject of praise rather than of interrogation. See footnotes 988–990 in Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1145.

50 Notice the imperative aorist of ἔστω in the phrase γνωστὸν ἔστω (Ac 4,10). It indicates the boldness of Peter (v. 13), who charges his judges with little respect for their office, in way similar to some philosophers and prophets.

51 LXX 117,22 corresponds to MS 118,22. The builders are the Temple authorities and the cornerstone (stone used at an important spot in the joining of two walls to bear their weight and stress) is Jesus. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 301.

52 The Lukan Peter affirms salvation for all in this world, “there is no other name under heaven” only through Jesus the Messiah. K.O. Sandnes, “Beyond ‘Love Language’: A Critical Examination of Krister Stendahl’s Exegesis of Acts 4:12,” *ST* 52 (1998): 43–56.

prohibition (Ac 4,19) and his reason for that decision (Ac 4,20). The refusal is formed as a rhetorical question and the decision takes the form of an official statement. The second part forms a coherent unit with the first part of the speech, with the second part acting as the climax to the whole speech. The speech starts with reference to the event (Ac 3,1–10), which here takes a form of the question (Ac 4,8b); it then gives the answer (Ac 4,10) supported by an explanatory addition (Ac 4,11); and it ends with the final statement concerning salvation (Ac 4,12). The statement is the subject of the prohibition (Ac 4,17), which was opposed by Peter in the form of a rhetorical question (Ac 4,19). Finally the reason for the refusal is given in the form of an official statement, concerning the proclamation of the kerygma, made by Peter and John. The speech contains two of the most important points of the kerygma proclaimed by the Twelve in Jerusalem, Jesus as the Saviour and proclaiming salvation in his name as the will of God.

C.2 *The Meaning of the Speech*

The direct reason for the speech is an official trial of Peter and John before the rulers of the nation and the elders (Ac 4,5–6), which resulted from Peter's teaching the resurrection of the dead in the name of Jesus (Ac 4,2). The trial starts with a question concerning the source of the power of healing shown by Peter and John (Ac 4,7).⁵³ The basis for the question is the Jewish conviction that only God is the source of the power to heal. We can assume that (according to Luke's narrative) the authorities knew about the content of Peter's speech (Ac 3,12–39) and their question is intended to ascertain the orthodoxy of Peter and John (Ac 4,1).⁵⁴ First, Peter in a rhetorical question skilfully presents the miracle performed by their hands as being the reason for their interrogation (Ac 4,9), although the question of the authorities concerns the source of the power and the name in which they performed the miracle (Ac 4,7). This kind of answer is not the way to avoid the answer (Peter will give the direct answer in the next verse), but the way to indicate the paradoxical

53 Since the healing of sicknesses is recognised in every culture as a good deed, the action of the Sanhedrin in an ironic way shows their ill-will towards Peter and John, which probably was caused by the contents of Peter's speech (Ac 3,12–26) following after the act of healing (Ac 3,1–10). Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1145–1148.

54 It is worth noting that the reason for the imprisonment of Peter and John as presented in Ac 4,1–3 by Luke, differs from the official reason for the trial, presented by the Sanhedrin in Ac 4,7. According to Luke's narration, the Sanhedrin did not indicate directly the true reason for the trial of Peter and John. Instead, they asked rather ridiculous and improper questions, since the common Jewish conviction points to God as the source of all good things.

nature of the interrogation, which should not take place if the true reason for it was healing of the man. Peter, answering the authorities' question, presented to them and to whole of Israel a basic teaching concerning his understanding of Jesus (Christology). The source of healing power comes from Jesus of Nazareth, who is the Messiah, crucified by them but justified by God through the act of raising him from the dead (Ac 4,10).⁵⁵ The man rejected by the authorities became the source of salvation (in physical sense) for the crippled man.⁵⁶ Faith in Jesus as the Messiah brought about a new reality for the man (Ac 3,16), but the rejection of Jesus, by the authorities placed them in a disadvantageous position (Ac 3,17–18). This contrast serves as the basis for the next statement concerning the way of salvation (in a religious sense), which starts with quotation of the Scriptures. According to the Lukan Peter, the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah by the authorities was foreseen by prophets, as the quotation from Ps 118,22 attests (Ac 4,11). However, Jesus, the useless stone in the eyes of the Jewish authorities, becomes the most important part in God's new building project.⁵⁷ In the project concerning creation of the messianic Israel, Jesus is the only door that one can use to enter the community.⁵⁸ Since Jesus is the only Saviour in whom all peoples, including the Jews, can be saved, it seems necessary to believe in his name (Ac 4,12). At that point the kerygmatic teaching in Peter's speech reaches its climax, proclaiming Jesus as the universal Saviour sent not only to Jews but to all peoples.⁵⁹ The term σώζω—to save

55 The use of ὑμεῖς can be interpreted in a narrow meaning as referring to the authorities present at the trial (Bruce) or in a wider meaning as referring to all Israel (Johnson). Bruce, *The Book of the Acts* (Grand Rapids: The Paternoster Press, 1988), 92–93; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 77. The second interpretation seems more appropriate due to the phrase γνωστὸν ἔστω πᾶσιν ὑμῖν καὶ παντὶ τῷ λαῷ Ἰσραήλ. The phrase γνωστὸν ἔστω πᾶσιν ὑμῖν—let be it known to you is not just introducing information but it is invocation preceding the announcement of an unexpected statement, something that can shock the hearers.

56 Although the term ὑγιής—whole, healthy, well refers to physical and mental health in the Pastoral Letters it refers also to moral and spiritual health (1 Tim 1,10, 6,3, 2 Tim 1,13, 4,3, Tit 1,9,13, 13,1–2,8).

57 From Peter's point of view, the new building project of God concerns the messianic community, which will be consolidated around Jesus, the resurrected Messiah. In this project the authorities refused to participate by their rejection of the Messiah. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 301.

58 As the latter parts of Acts shows, the messianic Israel will contain also Gentiles, since the salvation in the name of Jesus is addressed to all who want to hear it.

59 The statement presented in Ac 4,12 is the climax of the Christological kerygma presented in the three speeches of Peter (Ac 2,14–40, 3,12–26, 4,8–20).

refers here to both the physical and spiritual dimension.⁶⁰ It is the name of Jesus, which brings all people physical health and freedom from sins. This radical statement by the head of the new religious group, presented in such a frank manner, confused the Sanhedrin (for the moment) to such degree that “*they had nothing to say in reply*” (Ac 4,14), however after a short consultation they place a strong prohibition on proclaiming the name of Jesus (Ac 4,17). The prohibition concerns probably the statements presented in verse 10 and in verse 12. The decision of the Sanhedrin must be understood as an official declaration of the authorities, which includes not only the topic of the prohibition but also implied consequences for possible disobedience. The confidence of Peter and John challenged the authorities, which did not expect from such simple people this degree of resistance and determination (Ac 4,13), not only during Peter’s defending speech but also during his reply to the authorities’ prohibition. The open opposition to the decision (Ac 4,15–17), which Peter puts into a rhetorical question, clearly indicates that for him the will of the authorities is not the will of God (Ac 4,19). Peter with radical determination chooses to obey the will of God, which for Peter means to be a witness of Jesus’ deeds and words according to Jesus’ own command (Ac 4,20). Peter and John (as the representatives of Jesus’ followers) then found themselves facing a dilemma, a conflict between loyalty to the Sanhedrin, which was required from them as Jews and their own conscience; they chose their conscience.⁶¹ The rhetorical question suggests that if the Sanhedrin were in the same situation as Peter and John, they would make a similar decision,⁶² since it is impossible to the witnesses of Jesus not engage in the mission to which they have been chosen (Ac 1,8). This argument seems to convince the Sanhedrin, who dismisses Peter and John without any further questions.⁶³

The main message of the speech can be summarised in this way: the leading person among the Twelve is deeply convinced that it is will of God to proclaim Jesus as Messiah and Saviour, because according to Peter, Jesus is the only saving power on earth given by God to humankind (Ac 4,12). In Peter’s opinion, no authority has a right to prohibit proclaiming salvation in this name, which consequently means that Peter, the Jew, with strong confidence openly refused

60 Johnson includes also the social dimension, which in wider sense can be assumed, but the contents of the speech really do not include this dimension (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 78). The use of the term in Ac 4,9 and Ac 4,12 indicates some kind of wordplay based on the broad semantic range of the term *salvation*.

61 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 304.

62 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1162.

63 It does not mean that the Sanhedrin changed their decision; Ac 5,28 confirms it.

to obey the orders of the highest authority of Judaism in order to fulfil the order of God. In fact the opinion of Peter and John, in Luke's narrative, shows the confidence of the Jesus' followers living in Jerusalem.

C.3 *The Function of the Speech*

In the narrative strategy of Luke, the speech in Ac 4,8–12.19–20 takes a central place in the set of speeches (Ac 2,14–40, 3,12–26), as it witnesses to the growing confidence of those who believe in Jesus as the Messiah. The first part of the speech is a summary of the most important teaching contained in the two previous speeches (Ac 2,14–40, 3,12–26). The summary takes the form of a kerygma proclaimed to the authorities of Judaism. Peter proclaims Jesus as the only Saviour given by God to humankind, thus making Him also the Saviour of Jews. Peter's words are attested by the miracle, which was performed in the name of Jesus. To this argument the authorities can offer no opposition, leaving them at a great disadvantage (Ac 4,16). They decide to use their religious and political power and without discussion oblige Peter and John not to proclaim the name of Jesus.⁶⁴ However, the decision meets with Peter's opposition and disagreement. In a rhetorical question Peter directly indicates that their decision is not the will of God. Indirectly it means that the authorities are acting contrary to the will of God. It is Peter and John who do the will of God by fulfilling the task Jesus has appointed them to do (Ac 1,4–8). In the second part of the speech, Luke placed the point that separates the doctrine of Judaism from the doctrine of Jesus' believers. It is not yet a departure of Jesus' followers from Judaism, but it shows open opposition to the will of the religious authorities of Judaism. The authorities refused to recognise Jesus as Messiah, and Jesus' disciple refused to refrain from proclaiming the name of Jesus. Although Peter and John were not found guilty of any crime against the Law, a clear division has emerged on the level of Judaism's doctrine. Peter openly declares his disobedience to the official prohibition by the Temple's authorities concerning the proclamation of the name of Jesus as the Messiah, claiming that he is doing the will of God. Henceforth, in Luke's narrative, the Jewish authorities will not tolerate the disobedience of the followers of Jesus (Ac 5,28–33), and for their part the followers of Jesus will accent their belief that Jesus as the Messiah is the cornerstone of their interpretation of the scripture. All this indicates that the function of the speech is to present the final results of proclamation by the apostles in

64 The decision should be understood as an official prohibition concerning the proclamation of Jesus as the Messiah. The rhetorical question presented in verse 29 may suggest that some kind of discussion between Peter and the Sanhedrin took place at this point, but it was omitted by Luke. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1162.

Jerusalem Jesus as the Messiah. Their activities and teaching, which Luke presents in the two previous speeches, find their culmination in the official trial before the Sanhedrin, during which the most crucial statement of Jesus' followers was made. Jesus is the only Saviour, not only for Jews (Ac 3,26) but also for all humanity (Ac 4,12). This kerygma became the subject of the Sanhedrin's prohibition, to which Peter declares his disobedience, because in his opinion it was contrary to God's will. In this way, Luke presents the point that became the reason for conflict between the authorities of the Judaism and the new group, latter named Christian. The conflict is the theme of the next part of Luke's narration (Ac 5,12–8,3) and the next set of topical speeches, gives this speech a conclusive character within the section that presents the kerygma proclaimed by Jesus' followers.

1.2 *The Conflict in Jerusalem*

A The Second Speech of Peter before the Sanhedrin (Ac 5, 29–32)
The speech of Peter and the apostles before the Sanhedrin seems to be a summary of previous accounts given by Luke. If this so, why did Luke, after giving the summary of Ac 3,8–26 in the speech of Ac 4,8–12.19–20, write another summary with similar content? The speech starts with a statement (v. 29), which is a repetition of Ac 4,19 but presented now in a more radical manner. There then follows a kerygma (vv. 30–31), which also contains material already presented in the previous speeches, but again here it is given in a more radical way.⁶⁵ What is the reason and function of these changes?

The text of Ac 5, 29–32

²⁹ We must obey God rather than men. ³⁰ The God of our ancestors raised Jesus, whom you put to death by hanging him on a cross. ³¹ It is this Jesus whom God has exalted to his right hand, to be a Leader and a Saviour, to give Israel repentance and forgiveness of sins. ³² We are witness to these words, and so is the Holy Spirit, the gift of God to those who obey him.

A.1 *The Structural Analysis of the Speech*

An account preceding the speech (Ac 5,12–27) presents the activities of the apostles and believers in the portico of Salomon (Ac 5,12–16) and response to these activities by the Temple's authorities (Ac 5,17–19).⁶⁶ Although the apostles were arrested, they were liberated by an angel, and they continued to proclaim name of Jesus in the Temple (Ac 5,19–20). The speech is part of a second

⁶⁵ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 101–102.

⁶⁶ Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 39.

interrogation of the apostles before the Sanhedrin.⁶⁷ The interrogation starts with an accusation against the apostles concerning their disobedience to the order of the authorities who had prohibited them from any mission activities in Jerusalem (Ac 5,28, which refers back to Ac 4,18). The accusation concerns also the apostles' insistence on placing upon the authorities the responsibility for Jesus' death (v. 28, which refers back to Ac 2,23, 4,10). The speech of Peter and the apostles starts with an answer to the first accusation (v. 29). The answer is similar to that given by Peter and John in form of the rhetorical question during the first interrogation (Ac 4,29). However, here it is given as a direct statement *πειθαρχεῖν δεῖ θεῷ μᾶλλον ἢ ἀνθρώποις*—*our obedience to God comes before obedience to men*. The following part (vv. 30–31) contains answers to the second part of the accusation. Verses 30a and 31 contain a kerygma proclaimed by the apostles in Jerusalem, which refers to the elevation of Jesus by God's acts in raising and glorifying Him. Verse 30b (*whom you executed by hanging on a tree*) is an answer to second part of the accusation, and it concerns to responsibility of the authorities for Jesus' death. In a direct manner it places the responsibility for Jesus' death upon the authorities (as already in Ac 2,23, 4,10). The last part of the speech is a declaration of the apostles that they are witnesses to God's works through the power of the Holy Spirit (v. 32).

The speech consists of two answers to the two elements of the accusation. No particular structure can be found in this speech, which contains old and new kerygmatic elements and statements. The old elements, which can be found in previous speeches (Ac 2,12–40, 4,8–12.19–20), are mentioned in vv. 29–31.⁶⁸ The new element is mentioned in v. 32 and it concerns the Holy Spirit as the agent and witness to the apostles' mission.

A.2 *The Meaning of the Speech*

The speech is an answer to the accusation made in Ac 5,28. It contains elements (Ac 5,29=4,19; 5,30=4,10; 5,32=4,20) and topics (exaltation of Jesus—v. 31a; repentance and forgiveness to Israel—v. 31b) that have already appeared in Ac 4,8–12.19–20 as well as one new element (the Holy Spirit and Apostles as witnesses—v. 32). What Peter and John said in Ac 4,8–12.19–20 is repeated here by Peter and the apostles, but this time in a much bolder manner (Ac 5,29.32). The speech is in fact an official statement by the disciples, created by Peter and John (Ac 4,8–12), then accepted by the community (Ac 4,24–30), and now publicly announced to the Sanhedrin (Ac 5,29–32). This speech, however, resulted

67 It is a second interrogation of the Apostles. The account concerning the first interrogation is in Ac 4,1–22.

68 Concerning these elements of Peter's speech, see Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 42.

in much more severe consequences (Ac 5,33) than the earlier speeches. The opening words seem to be a repetition of Ac 4,19, but now instead of a rhetorical question there is a direct declaration, very similar to the famous sentence of Plato (*I shall obey god rather than you*).⁶⁹ The apostles choose to obey God (v. 29), what means they are not going to obey the prohibition by the Temple's authorities. There follows an argument to justify their decision. The apostles will obey God, because the God of Israel raised Jesus who was crucified by the Jewish authorities.⁷⁰ Not only this, but God also raised him up to heaven, to the right hand of God, the place where He is dwelling, and made him the Leader and Saviour for Israel (the Messiah). The term ἀρχηγός—*he who is the first, who stands at the head of, the one who leads* occurs four times in the NT (Ac 3,15, 5,31, Heb 2,10, 6,20), always in a Christological context with references to the exalted Jesus.⁷¹ Here, the term refers to Jesus, who is in heaven and who by the act of resurrection and exaltation to heaven became the leader of the new Israel in its exodus from sin. The term σωτήρ—*Saviour* occurs in the NT eight times with references to God (Lk 1,47, 1 Tim 1,1, 2,3, 4,10, Tit 1,3, 2,10, 3,4, Jude 25) and seventeen times with references to Jesus (Lk 2,11, Jn 4,42, Ac 5,31, 13,23, Eph 5,23, 2 Tim 1,10, Tit 1,4, 2,13, 3,6, 2 Pet 1,1,11, 2,20, 3,2,18, 1 Jn 4,14). With reference to Jesus, the term usually functions as fixed title for Christ, but in a few cases (Phil 3,20, Eph 5,23) it refers to Christ as “*the anticipated eschatological perfecter*.”⁷² Jesus gave himself in sacrifice in order to sanctify those, who by faith became parts of his body (Church), which is heading for the God's kingdom. By combining these two titles the Lukan Peter indicates that Jesus

69 Plato, *Apologia* vol. 1, LCL (London, 1953), 108.

70 Although the resurrection of Jesus was from the beginning denied by the Jewish authorities, the concept of resurrection from death was a source of disagreement between the Sadducees who did not believe it, and the Pharisees who did. From the time of the Maccabees it had come to be accepted, though unofficially, in general religious thought. However, here the resurrection of Jesus by God is not the object of a polemical discussion, rather it is invoked as part of an argument that seeks to demonstrate that the decision of the Sanhedrin respecting Jesus' fate was wrong. The act of God in raising Jesus from the dead, which counteracts their action, exposes the wrongness of their action and their undoubted guilt. The dramatically contrasting nature of the two actions, where no mistake or wrongdoing can be imputed to God, exposes the evil that was the act of the Sanhedrin. Even though they invoke Deut. 21,22–23 as justification for their act, which was done under the presumption that it was in accord with the Law. The accusation “*by hanging him on a tree*” Peter repeats in Ac 10,39 and Paul uses it in Gal 3,13.

71 P.G. Müller, “ἀρχηγός,” in *EDNT*, ed. H. Balz and G. Schneider, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 163–164.

72 K.H. Schelkle, “σωτήρ,” in *EDNT*, vol. 3, 325–327.

not only has saved those who believe (already present but not yet anticipated eschatology) but also continuously leads those, whom He has saved.⁷³

He is the only leader and Saviour by whom Israel can find repentance and forgiveness of their sins. By saying that God raised Jesus to His right hand, the apostles proclaim Jesus to be equal to God, which for the Temple authorities was nothing other than blasphemy. By saying that Jesus is the Leader and Saviour for Israel the apostles contradicted Jewish tradition and teaching concerning the Messiah (v. 31). Obviously for the Sanhedrin, the apostles were guilty not only of disobedience, but also they were guilty of the greater crime of blasphemy, and in this case the decision of the Sanhedrin could be only one (Ac 5,33). The speech of Peter ends with the introduction of a new thought concerning them and the Holy Spirit as witness (Ac 5,32). Although the thought is grounded in Luke's narrative concept concerning the Holy Spirit as being the main agent of the disciples' attitude (Ac 2,32–39, 4,24–31), here it is used to give Peter's statement divine authority. The kerygma proclaimed by the apostles is attested by the Holy Spirit, who is given to those who obey God. The phrase "*to obey God*" in this context means to believe in Jesus as the Saviour and the Leader. The statement that the Holy Spirit together with the apostles is a witness to Jesus indirectly means that those who are not witnesses of Jesus (do not believe in Jesus as the Messiah) do have not the gift of God's Spirit. It makes them opponents of God. This indirect ironic suggestion indicates that the authorities do not have the spirit of God (v. 32) and they do not obey God, directly unleashing their anger towards Peter and John, which probably strongly influenced their decision (v. 33).

The content of the apostles' teaching is now drastically at odds with the teaching of Judaism. The problem in the relationship between the Sanhedrin and the Twelve no longer concerns the accusation presented in Ac 5,28, but has escalated to the level of a doctrinal issue (Jesus at the right hand of God) and a socio-religious level (discrediting the Sanhedrin as true religious and social leaders).

A.3 *The Function of the Speech*

If we attempt to put the speeches of the Acts into groups according to the places where they were given, the speech given by Peter and the apostles in Ac 5,29–32 would be counted as another speech in a unit called "the Temple speeches". This unit would contain five speeches, where the first speech is the speech to the crowd in the Temple (Ac 3,12–26), the second is the speech of Peter and John to the rulers and elders (Ac 4,8–12.19–20), the third is the com-

73 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1218–1220.

munity prayer (Ac 4,24–30), the fourth is the speech of Peter and the apostles before the Sanhedrin (Ac 5,29–32), and the fifth speech is the speech of Stephen (Ac 7,2–53). However, it seems better to divide the speeches in Acts according to their topics rather than places, because in Luke's narrative the speeches contain theological teachings, which are logically and consequently developed within the group consist of three speeches referring to the same topic and placed in the same socio-historical context.⁷⁴ Considering the topic of the speeches, the speech of Peter and the apostles before the Sanhedrin (Ac 5,29–32) could be connected with the first group of topical speeches called "the beginning of the mission in Jerusalem" (Chapter 2, point 1.1), since in fact the speech is a summary of the preceding speeches, however its socio-geographical context favours including it in a new group of topical speeches named "the conflict in Jerusalem" (Chapter 2, point 1.2). This group contains three speeches: the speech of Peter and the apostles before the Sanhedrin (Ac 5,29–32, the speech of Gamaliel (Ac 5,35–39) and the speech of Stephen (Ac 7,2–53). The speech of Peter before the Sanhedrin is the first speech in the group, which is placed in context of an open conflict between the apostles and the Sanhedrin, in the end leading to the persecution of Jesus' followers. Although, the speech contains a summary of previous speeches, it presents this teaching as a radical statement, which leaves no opening for dialogue or discussion. The speech caused a polarisation of the positions, showing the radical differences between the doctrine of Judaism and the kerygma proclaimed by the apostles. Proclaiming Jesus as the resurrected Messiah, who was raised to the right hand of God and is the only Saviour of Israel, meant to the Sanhedrin nothing less than a radical departure from Judaism in terms of religious doctrine. The main function of the speech is to indicate the basic problem at the doctrinal level (Jesus on the right hand of God), which caused the rift between the new group and the authorities of the Temple. Because the Twelve make the faith in Jesus, as the Saviour and the Leader, the basic point of the Judaism's orthodoxy (Ac 5,31–32), the Sanhedrin, who did not accept the teaching, answered with a proper penalty for blasphemy.⁷⁵ This speech indicates a new chapter in Luke's

74 The first main group of topical speeches in Acts can be called "the beginning of the mission in Jerusalem". The group contains: the speech at Pentecost (Ac 2,14–40); the speech to the crowd in the Temple (Ac 3,12–26); the speech of Peter and John to the rulers and elders (Ac 4,8–12,19–20). All these speeches were given by Peter in Jerusalem and their focus is proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah.

75 On the one hand, the Twelve see themselves as true Jews, whose witness is attested by the Holy Spirit, which makes the Sanhedrin to be Jews who do not obey God. On the

narrative concerning the church in Jerusalem, which refers to the consequences of proclaiming teaching rejected by the authorities.

B The Speech of Gamaliel (Ac 5, 35–39)

The blasphemy of the Twelve angered the members of the Sanhedrin and led them to condemn the Twelve to death. Surprisingly, one of the members of the Sanhedrin, a teacher of the Law named Gamaliel gives a speech, which seems to be pro-Christian and leads to the freeing of the Twelve. Both the circumstances of the trial, and the person of Gamaliel with the reputation he enjoyed in the Sanhedrin and society, make the content of the speech surprising for readers.⁷⁶ Why does one of those who oppose the Twelve give such a speech? In order to find the meaning and function of the speech in Luke's narrative concept, we will analyse the speech in the context of the group of topical speeches concerning the conflict in Jerusalem.

The text of Ac 5, 35–39

³⁵ Israelites Israel, take care as to what you intend to do with these men.

³⁶ For not long ago Theudas appeared, professing to be somebody, and was joined by a body of some four hundred men. But he was killed; and all his followers dispersed and disappeared. ³⁷ After him, Judas the Galilean appeared at the time of the census, and induced people to follow him; yet he, too, perished and all his followers were dispersed. ³⁸ And, in this present case, my advice to you is not to interfere with these men, but to leave them alone, for, if this plan and this work are merely of human origin, it will be destroyed; ³⁹ but, if it is of God origin, you will be powerless to destroy it. You may even find yourselves fighting against God.

B.1 *The Structural Analysis of the Speech*

The speech follows the bold speech of Peter and the apostles, which aroused the anger of the Sanhedrin to the extent that they wished to put the apostles to death (Ac 5,30–33). This could mean the end of the Christian movement within Judaism (Ac 5,33). However, Gamaliel the Pharisee, famous and respected

other hand, the Sanhedrin members see themselves as the guardians of the Law and the Tradition, which makes the Twelve guilty of blasphemy.

76 Soards observes that the speech of Gamaliel contains rhetorical devices hardly used elsewhere in Acts, but often use in Greek-Roman historiography. M.L. Soards, "The Speeches in Acts in relation to Other Pertinent Ancient Literature," *ETL* 70 (1/1994): 69.

among the Jews as a teacher of the Law and a member of Sanhedrin gave this speech, which saved the Twelve (Ac 5,40).⁷⁷

The speech has three sections. The first section contains Gamaliel's address to the Sanhedrin with an indication of the issue (v. 35). This section shows Gamaliel as a man, who was not enthusiastic about the decision of the Sanhedrin and who was not led by his emotions. The second section contains two examples, which serve as preparation for the presentation of his point of view (Ac 5,36–37).⁷⁸ These two examples (two events from recent history of Judea) are used as arguments to calm tempers and return to rational thinking, thus making it possible for Gamaliel to have his opinion accepted. The third section contains Gamaliel's proposal and warning (Ac 5,38–39). The use of the imperatives *προσέχετε*—*give heed to* (Ac 5,35) and *ἀπόστητε*—*withdraw* (Ac 5,38) suggests that Gamaliel addressed the Sanhedrin in a strong authoritative manner. The use of the imperative mode also suggests that Gamaliel forced a decision on the Sanhedrin. In this case the Sanhedrin seems to act passively, accepting Gamaliel's deliberative rhetoric without discussion.

After the speech there is a short narrative (Ac 5,40–42) concerning the decision of the Sanhedrin (v. 40) and the apostles' reaction to that decision (vv. 41–42).

B.2 *The Meaning of the Speech*

According to Luke, among the members of the Sanhedrin there is one man, who did not lose his sense of reality and was still able to think rationally (v. 35). Using his position (v. 34) and knowledge (vv. 36–37) he requests that the Sanhedrin not to put the apostles to death (v. 38) but to leave the matter to be tested by time. It seems to be somewhat illogical since the two examples used by Gamaliel (Ac 5,36–37) show that those groups disappeared after their leaders

77 Concerning the teacher named Gamaliel, see Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 99.

78 According to Luke, Gamaliel uses as examples the cases of Theudas and Judas the Galilean (Ac 5,36–37). Both cases are mentioned by Joseph Flavius in *The Antiquities of the Jews*. Theudas is presented in *Ant.* 20.97–104 as a magician who acted as a prophet and established a short-lived religious movement somewhere near the Jordan. The movement was exterminated by Cuspius Fadus, the governor of Syria in AD 45 or AD 46. Note, however, that the time given for this event involving Theudas is later than the time of Gamaliel's speech. Judas the Galilean is presented in *Ant.* 18.23 and *Bell.* 2.433 as the leader of the fourth sect of Judaism (the Zealots), who led Galileans to a revolt against Coponius the equestrian in the time of Gessius Florus the governor of Syria (AD 6). His sons James and Simon were crucified on the orders of Tiberius Alexander (*Ant.* 20.102). Nothing else is known about Judas, but his movement continued for many years. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 235–239.

were killed.⁷⁹ Because of this the question arises: what was the real purpose of Gamaliel's action? Some scholars think that he favoured the Christians and his purpose was to protect the Twelve.⁸⁰ However, in the circumstances surrounding the gathering of the Sanhedrin and in the context of the result of Gamaliel's speech, it is less probable that Gamaliel intentionally spoke in favour of the Twelve, although paradoxically his speech worked in favour of the apostles. The Sanhedrin driven by strong emotion desired to put the Twelve to death. Gamaliel begins his speech with the advice that the matter must be analysed very carefully and that any decision cannot be based on emotions. The two examples then given by Gamaliel seem to be strange and even inappropriate. The two leaders of the groups mentioned in the examples were killed not by the order of the Sanhedrin, but by the Romans. Theudas was a leader of a religious movement and he was put to death by Cuspius Fadus, although he did not rebel against Rome and his movement was not of a political character.⁸¹ Judas the Galilean, according to Josephus Flavius, was the founder of the fourth most important sect of the Jews, similar to Pharisees in thought, with the exception that they promoted active opposition to the Romans as the way to liberation (*Ant.* 8.23). This nationalistic, rather than religious movement known as the Zealots, continued to be active for the next sixty years, and was still very popular at time Gamaliel delivered his speech. The speech of Gamaliel (in Ac 5.35–40) is a narrative creation of Luke, for whom at the time of writing the Acts the two examples were already past events.⁸² The first example had a religious character and the second was political, but in neither case was there any

79 At least, it appeals to Theudas, whose death is mentioned by Josephus. Concerning Judas, the death of his two sons may suggest that also he was executed, although Josephus says nothing about it. These two examples suggest rather a necessity of action against the opponents, since both cases were militarily suppressed.

80 This interpretation of Gamaliel's action, has its roots in accepting the Pharisees as the closer group to Christians in terms of basic convictions (e.g. resurrection of the body, afterlife, the Messiah). This interpretation suggests Gamaliel held the same or similar thoughts like the Twelve. R. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, vol. 2 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1986), 67.

81 Josephus writes that Theudas promised his followers to stop the waters of Jordan River in manner similar to Joshua and Moses (*Ant.* 20.97–102). It gives his movement the Messianic character. According to Luke, Theudas had four hundreds of followers, but this information is not given by Josephus in his writings. This information provides only Luke in Ac 5.36.

82 It is possible that Luke received from Saul/Paul information, about Gamaliel's speech, but it is less probable that he received the record of the speech. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 234.

active involvement by the Sanhedrin. Gamaliel's conclusion is based on knowledge of contemporary history, which shows that all human activities sooner or later will pass, and because of that it is wiser not to be involved in their destruction.⁸³ The Twelve had already earned many supporters among Jews in Jerusalem (Ac 5,12–16), which gave support to the supposition of Gamaliel that the movement could be something more than a merely human initiative.⁸⁴ If time should prove the movement to be of God, which the Lukan Gamaliel seems to take into consideration, the Sanhedrin would prove themselves to be the enemy of God, in the eyes of Jews. Preventing the Sanhedrin from acting rapidly and at hazard, Gamaliel saves the Sanhedrin, which had been accused by Peter and John of killing Jesus, from taking responsibility for the death of the apostles. At the same time, he unintentionally saves the Twelve, making possible the further realisation of Jesus' order. It seems, then, that the reason for Gamaliel's action was not his favour for the apostles but his care about the Sanhedrin's reputation.

This is a second time the authorities let the apostles go free, however this time they punished the apostles, and the event became the first act of persecution of the apostles (Ac 5,40). Persecution is the theme of the following narrative (Ac 6,8–8,3).

B.3 *The Function of the Speech*

The speech is the second one in the section concerning the beginning of the persecution of the Jesus community in Jerusalem. The conflict between the Twelve and the authorities of the Temple finally takes the shape of open confrontation (Ac 5,30–32) and it reaches an extremely dangerous stage (Ac 5,33). Due to the peculiarity of the speech, in which a member of the Sanhedrin speaks on behalf of the Twelve, its function can be seen in many different ways. Very often, it is seen as a pro-Christian speech, where Gamaliel is an

83 Maybe, Gamaliel was aware of a fact that killing the leaders of group quiet popular among people may cause a stronger opposition against the authorities. This supposition is supported by fact that Luke mentioned that the authorities were afraid of the reaction of the people (Ac 4,21).

84 Luke indicates this supposition by using *εἰ δὲ ἐκ θεοῦ ἐστίν*—*but if it is of God* (*εἰ* with present indicative), which indicates stronger probability than *ἢ ἢ ἀνθρώπων*—*if it is from man* (*ἐάν* with present subjunctive), which suggests rather less probability (Ac 5,38–39). It is also possible that Gamaliel considered that the growth of the messianic movement established by Jesus, who was condemned to death by the Romans on the basis of the accusation that he is the king of Jews, sooner or later would draw the attention of the Romans.

advocate of the Twelve who understood that the movement is of divine origin.⁸⁵ According to other interpretations of the function of the speech, the Pharisees (to whom Gamaliel belonged) are in Luke's narrative in Acts presented as that part of Judaism that was closest in teaching to Jesus' group.⁸⁶ Both interpretations show Gamaliel in positive light. The speech of Gamaliel gives an answer to the question why the apostles were not executed even though they were accused of blasphemy. It also shows that not all members of the Sanhedrin were ready to support the most radical solution to the problem.

However, there is not sufficient evidence to accept the interpretation that Gamaliel, according to Luke, was showing particular favour towards the Twelve. Gamaliel did not argue that the words of Peter were true or that they have the right to proclaim the name of Jesus. He argued that harsh and impulsive action by the Sanhedrin could work in the end against the Sanhedrin. The crucifixion of Jesus had not solved the problem—on the contrary the followers of Jesus put responsibility for Jesus' death on the Sanhedrin (Ac 5,28). No one could foresee the eventual consequences of execution of the Twelve. Gamaliel, therefore, acted in the interests of the Sanhedrin. Their decision to put to death those who had worked miracles could arouse among the people the accusation that they were acting against God.⁸⁷ To leave the matter to be tested by the time was for the Sanhedrin the safest solution to the problem. According to Luke's narrative, the time of testing the disciples of Jesus will come soon (Ac 6,8–8,3), when persecution will be meted out not by the Sanhedrin, but by the people, who will not accept the teaching of Jesus' followers (Stephen) and will turn their anger against him. This leads us to the conclusion that the function

85 Padilla, *The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts*, 114–115. Johnson's observation that Gamaliel was most probably presented at the trial of Jesus, allows to see the speech of Gamaliel not in terms of sympathy for the Twelve but as the rational conclusion coming from the fact that after Jesus, the leader was crucified, his disciples still keep going His way even if they are facing a point of their destruction. See Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 101–104.

86 Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 117; Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, vol. 2, 67. Although, in many points the teaching of Jesus' disciples and the teaching of the Pharisees sect are similar, however the resurrection of Jesus as the Messiah and his raising to the heaven, were the most important teaching for the Twelve (Ac 5,29–32), which could not be accepted by the Pharisees.

87 Scholars usually see here the thought of Luke rather than the conviction of Gamaliel. However, miracles are usually a sign of God's power at work, supporting the case that the work of the Twelve was of divine origin. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 235. We are of the opinion that probably the historical Gamaliel and the Lukan Gamaliel were convinced that the miracle was performed by the Twelve through divine aid, however it was not reason for his speech in favour of abandoning the desire to put the Twelve to death.

of the speech, which is the second speech in section of the speeches concerning the conflict in Jerusalem (Ac 5,29–32.35–39, 7,1–53.56.59–60), is to indicate that the source of persecution (in the form of the death penalty) of Jesus' followers was not the Sanhedrin.

C The Speech of Stephen (Ac 7, 2–53. 56. 59–60)

Stephen's speech is the longest among the speeches in the Acts, it contains the longest survey, concerning the history of salvation, written by Luke.⁸⁸ The aim and function of the speech in Luke's narrative as well as the source of the Lukan Stephen's speech are subjects for discussion among scholars.⁸⁹ The fact that the Hellenist Jew,⁹⁰ Stephen (not one of the Twelve), who was supposed to care for the material needs of the community and was not designated to proclaim the word of God, was found guilty of blasphemy, gives ground for the suspicion that there is a hidden message in the speech, which Luke intended to present to the reader. In order to find this message, we will analyse structure of the speech in order to determine its meaning and its function.⁹¹

The text of Ac 7, 2–53. 56. 59–60

² And he said, Hear me, brethren and fathers! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, ³ and said to him, *Leave your country and your relatives and go to the land that I will show you.* ⁴ Then he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. From there, after his father died, God had him move to this country in which you are now living. ⁵ But He gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot of ground, and yet, even when he had no child, He promised that He would give it to him as a possession, and to his descendants after him. ⁶ But God spoke to this effect, that his descendant would be aliens in a foreign land, and that they would be enslaved and mistreated for four hundred years. ⁷ *But I will judge the nation that they serve*, said God, *and after that they shall come out and worship me in this place.* ⁸ And He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so Abraham became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day; and

88 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1330.

89 Concerning the problem of sources, see Keener, *Acts*, vol. 1, 264–265; vol. 2, 1338–1342.

90 M. Simon, *St Stephen and the Hellenists in the Primitive Church* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1958), 75.

91 A literary analysis of the speech was done by Kilgallen. See J. Kilgallen, *The Stephen Speech: A Literary and Redactional Study of Acts 7,2–53*, AB 67 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1976).

Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs.⁹ The patriarchs became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt. Yet God was with him,¹⁰ and rescued him from all his afflictions, and granted him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he made him governor over Egypt and all his household.¹¹ Now a famine came over all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction with it, and our fathers could find no food.¹² But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers there the first time.¹³ On the second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph's family was disclosed to Pharaoh.¹⁴ Then Joseph sent word and invited Jacob his father and all his relatives to come to him, seventy-five persons in all.¹⁵ And Jacob went down to Egypt and there he and our fathers died.¹⁶ From there they were removed to Shechem and laid in the tomb which Abraham had purchased for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.¹⁷ But as the time of the promise was approaching which God had assured to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt,¹⁸ until there arose another king over Egypt, who knew nothing about Joseph.¹⁹ It was he who took shrewd advantage of our race and mistreated our fathers so that they would expose their infants and they would not survive.²⁰ It was at this time that Moses was born; and he was lovely in the sight of God, and he was nurtured three months in his father's home.²¹ And after he had been set outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him away and nurtured him as her own son.²² Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds.²³ But when he was approaching the age of forty, it entered his mind to visit his brethren, the sons of Israel.²⁴ And when he saw one of them being treated unjustly, he defended him and took vengeance for the oppressed by striking down the Egyptian.²⁵ And he supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him, but they did not understand.²⁶ On the following day he appeared to them as they were fighting together, and he tried to reconcile them in peace, saying, *Men, you are brethren, why do you injure one another?*²⁷ *Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?*²⁸ *Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?*²⁹ At this remark, Moses fled and became an alien in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons.³⁰ After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of the mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning thorn bush.³¹ When Moses saw it, he marvelled at the sight; and as he approached to look more closely, there came the voice of the Lord:³² *I am the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.* Moses shook with fear and would not venture to look.³³ but the Lord

said to him: *Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.* ³⁴ *I have surely seen the mistreatment of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their groaning, and I have come down to rescue them. Come now, I will send you to Egypt.* ³⁵ This Moses whom they disowned, saying, *Who made you a ruler and a judge?* is the one whom God sent to be both a ruler and a deliverer with the help of the angel who appeared to him in the thorn bush. ³⁶ This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and in the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years. ³⁷ This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, *God will raise up a prophet for you from your own people as he raised me up.* ³⁸ This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and who was with our fathers; and he received living oracles to pass on to you. ³⁹ Our fathers were unwilling to be obedient to him, but repudiated him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt, ⁴⁰ saying to Aaron: *make gods for us who will lead the way for us; as for this Moses who led us out from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has happened to him.* ⁴¹ At that time they made a calf and brought a sacrifice to the idol, and were rejoicing in the works of their hands. ⁴² But God turned away and delivered them up to serve the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, *Did you offer to me slain victims and sacrifices forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?* ⁴³ *No; you took along the tent of Moloch, and the star of your god Rephan, the images that you made to worship; so I will remove you beyond Babylon.* ⁴⁴ Our fathers had the tabernacle of testimony in the wilderness, just as He who spoke to Moses directed him to make it according to the pattern which he had seen. ⁴⁵ And having received it in their turn, our fathers brought it in with Joshua upon dispossessing the nations whom God drove out before our fathers, until the time of David. ⁴⁶ David found favour in God's sight, and asked that he might find a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. ⁴⁷ But it was Solomon who built a house for Him. ⁴⁸ However, the Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands; as the prophet says: ⁴⁹ *Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest?* ⁵⁰ *Did not my hand make all these things?* ⁵¹ You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. ⁵² Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; ⁵³ you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it.

⁵⁶ and he said: Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁹ They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit! ⁶⁰ Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice: Lord, do not hold this sin against them!

C.1 *The Structural Analysis of the Speech*

The immediate context of the speech is Stephen's activities in the Synagogue of Freedmen where Hellenists were gathered (Ac 6,8–9). The activities contain signs and miracles. Stephen met with opposition from Greek-speaking Jews from abroad. They were not able to win the argument with Stephen, and as a result they accuse him falsely of speaking against the Law of Moses and God (Ac 6,10–11). This led to the trial of Stephen before the Sanhedrin. Here another false accusation was presented concerning the destruction of the Temple by Jesus and the changing of the Law (Ac 6,14). The direct reason for the speech is the question of the high priest addressed to Stephen concerning the truth of the accusation (Ac 7,1). The speech is an indirect answer to this question.

The offensive forensic speech⁹² begins with short address, the *exordium* (Ac 7,2a), which is followed by a very long *narratio* (Ac 7,2b–34), in which an account of Jewish history from Abraham to Moses is presented. The third unit is a *propositio* (Ac 7,35), which presents Moses as the chosen one, rejected by the nation. The next unit is the *argumentatio* (Ac 7,36–50), which provides proofs for the *propositio*. The last unit of the speech, the *peroratio*, contains Stephen's accusation addressed directly to the Sanhedrin and indirectly to the whole of Israel (Ac 7,51–53).⁹³ The speech got two additions (Ac 7,56 and Ac 6,59–60).⁹⁴ The first contains the account of Stephen's revelation, which is considered by the crowd to be a blasphemy (Ac 7,56). The last section contains two prayers by Stephen uttered during his stoning (Ac 7,59–60).

The account concerning the speech has two parts: vv. 2–34, and vv. 35–53. Continuity between the first and the second part is not lacking, although the

⁹² Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*, 58.

⁹³ J. Dupont, "La structure oratoire du discours d'Etienne (Actes 7)," *Bib* 66 (2/1985): 153–67.

⁹⁴ These two additions we include in the speech because it seems to us that the direct reason for the impulsive action of the crowd against Stephen was caused by his blasphemy presented in verse 56 rather than by the contents of the speech (Ac 7,2–53). Luke notes that in response to the contents of Stephen's speech, the assembly was infuriated (a similar reaction to that provoked by the speech of Peter in Ac 5,33 but not resulting in a decision on a penalty). In contrast, after Stephen's speech, the crowd without awaiting a final decision from the Sanhedrin, driven by their emotions stoned Stephen. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 139.

second part begins with the accusation (v. 35), which is not directly connected to the first part; however, the second part is based on the interpretation of history presented in the first part.⁹⁵ After the speech Luke gives a short account of the persecution of Jesus' followers in Jerusalem that began following the trial and death of Stephen (Ac 8,1–3).

C.2 *The Meaning of the Speech*

The first part of the speech (Ac 7,2–35) contains a history of Israel from Abraham to Moses: Ac 7,2–16 covers Jewish history until the death of Jacob, and Ac 7,17–35 covers the history from Moses until the end of the time of exile. This history is based for the most part on the accounts in the Books of Genesis, Exodus and Deuteronomy.⁹⁶ The story is told according to a chronology of events (with some changes and modifications), however it takes very general and schematic character, in some instances the sequence of events concerning Abraham does not agree with Gen 11,3–12,5. After v. 17 some additions and interpretations appear in the account, which points to the topic of fulfilment of God's promises with special reference to Moses (v. 17, v. 25, v. 35). Surprisingly, in whole *narratio* (Ac 7,2b–34) there is no answer to the high priest's question.⁹⁷ Stephen addressed the Sanhedrin with the words "*my brothers, my fathers*", which indicates that at this point of his speech he accented the identity between him and the addressees, on the basis of their sharing the same tradition (v. 2).⁹⁸ The tradition, which they were sharing, starts with the story

95 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 260–261.

96 References and use of other books appear in: v. 2—Ps 29,3 (MS 30, 3); v. 10—Ps 105,21 (MS 106, 21); v. 37—Num 14,33; Amos 5,25; v. 38—Deut 4,10, 9,10, 18,15,16; v. 29—Num 14,3; v. 41—Is 2,8; v. 43—Amos 5,25–27 (LXX); v. 46—Ps 132,5 (MS 133, 5); vv. 49–50—Is 66,1–2. Quotations are taken from LXX. It seems that Luke constructed Stephen's speech from a Deuteronomist tradition.

97 In fact, Luke in his narration concerning Stephen's trial exposes the limited involvement (only the initial question) of the Sanhedrin (v. 1). The purpose of the question seems to be to give a ground for the Stephen's speech, which must be counted as a rather offensive one than a defensive one. In the story concerning Abraham (Ac 7,2–16), the Lukan Stephen concentrates on the election of Abraham and the promise given by God to him. In story of Moses (Ac 7,17–34), Luke underlines the rejection of Moses by his people, and finally the election of Moses as God's messenger. Although in the case of the story of Moses the allusion to Jesus is evident, the accusation that Stephen spoke against Judaism (Ac 6,11) and that he stated that Jesus would replace the Temple and the Law, is never explored or justified.

98 Stephen's presentation of the tradition slightly differs from the biblical tradition. When Stephen speaks about a theophany (God appearing to Abraham in Mesopotamia), the

of Abraham (Ac 7,2–8), and it includes the theophany in Mesopotamia, when Abraham was commanded to head for Haran (vv. 2–3),⁹⁹ the departure from Haran in order to enter temporarily a land, which many generations later became the “Promised Land” for Abraham’s descendants (vv. 4–5), the prophecy concerning dwelling of Abraham’s descendants in Egypt (vv. 6–7), ending with the covenant between God, attested to by the sign of circumcision (v. 8).¹⁰⁰ Although the account concerns Abraham, the main subject of the narrative is God, who acts authoritatively towards Abraham, his faithful servant. The next part of the tradition concerns the story of the patriarchs, which is reduced here to the account of Joseph (Ac 7,9–16).¹⁰¹ Joseph is the one rejected by his brothers but chosen by God to save the brothers and the whole family (vv. 9–14).¹⁰² Concerning the saving of the family, the Lukan Stephen mentions that Joseph on the second encounter made himself known to his brothers, intimating that like the brothers, who at the first encounter did not recognise Joseph, so Jews on the first encounter did not recognise Jesus, however they will recognise him on the second. According to Stephen’s account, Jacob and his sons died in Egypt and they were buried in Shechem, where Abraham had bought a tomb from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem (Ac 7,15–16).¹⁰³ However,

biblical tradition speaks only of an oracle Abraham received (Gen 12,7). Stephen will distinguish himself from the audience in v. 51, when he starts the *peroratio*.

- 99 According to Lukan Stephen, the source for Abraham’s decision to depart from Mesopotamia was God’s direct order addressed to him, which included an indication of a purpose of his journey. It is difficult task to point to a reason for the obvious disagreement at this point between Stephen’s history of Abraham and Gen 11,3–12,5 but the theological character of the narrative sees the Lukan Stephen pointing to God’s election of Abraham from the very beginning, rather than as the result of some socio-historical circumstances and their consequences.
- 100 In v. 4, Stephen says “*in which you are now living*”, indicating that he is a Jew of the Diaspora. The narrative concerning Abraham is based on Gen 12–17, however the material is used according to the Lukan Stephen’s agenda, which basically is a kind of history lesson indirectly justifying speaker’s specific understanding of history and its interpretation, in order to convince the hearers. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 119–122.
- 101 See E. Richard, “The Polemical Character of the Joseph Episode in Acts 7,” *JBL* 98 (1979): 255–267.
- 102 The Lukan Stephen presents (in an indirect but understandable manner for the readers) Joseph as the *topos* of Jesus. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 121–122. This motive is developed in the Church Fathers’ writings (1 Clement 4,9, 5,2, Basil the Great, *Homily* 11,4).
- 103 Mention of Shechem in v. 16 leads scholars to see here Luke’s deliberative allusion to the Samaritans, who are the subject of the following Luke’s narrative concerning the mission outside Jerusalem (Ac 8,4–25). F.S. Spencer, *Acts*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1997, 75–78; M.H. Scharlemann, *A Singular Saint*, AnBib 34 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute,

this account differs from biblical tradition, according to which Abraham had bought the cave from Ephron, the Hittite, in Hebron (Gen 23,1–20) where Jacob was buried (Gen 50,12–13).¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, Joseph and his sons are also said to be buried in Shechem in the place, which Joseph had bought from Hamor, the father of Shechem (Josh 24,32).¹⁰⁵

The second unit of the *narratio* (Ac 7,17–34) concerns the end of the Jews' dwelling in Egypt and beginning of their liberation by Moses. The account begins with the statement that the period of dwelling in Egypt was a time of constant growth of the nation (v. 17) until the moment when Jewish influence in Egypt comes to the end and a new Pharaoh begins the persecution of the nation, which was designed to reduce the number of Jews (vv. 18–19). The account is a summary of the long narration given in Ex 1,10–11,12.¹⁰⁶ From verse 20 to verse 34 there is a narrative of Moses' life from his birth until he became leader, divided in three periods, each covering forty years of Moses' life.¹⁰⁷ The first period contains the story from the Moses' birth until he visited his brethren (vv. 20–23). This account is based on Ex 2,1–10, but it also contains information concerning Moses' education (v. 22), absent in Biblical sources but found in Philo.¹⁰⁸ The second period recounts Moses' attack on the Egyptian and continues until the revelation on Mount Sinai (vv. 24–29). Only a fleeting mention is made of the time in Midian (v. 29), and the focus is entirely on presenting Moses as a leader, who is misunderstood and rejected by his brethren (vv. 24–28).¹⁰⁹ The account is similar to the Ex 2,11–15,21–22 with the exception of v. 25, where Lukan Stephen includes Moses' thoughts, which in fact are

1968), 41. If the accusation against Stephen (Ac 6,14) was true, the mention of Shechem may refer to the Jewish/Samaritan polemic concerning the proper site for the Temple, however since Luke has excluded the possibility that Stephen spoke against the Temple (Ac 6,13), this supposition seems to be ungrounded.

104 N. Dahl, "The Abraham Story in Luke-Acts," in *Studies in Luke-Acts*, ed. L.E. Keck and J.L. Martyn, 139–158.

105 At this point Luke's Stephen is mixing biblical traditions concerning the burial of Jacob, Joseph and the brothers of Joseph. More about the problem see Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1369–1373.

106 Stephen uses the expression "*our people*" to shows his identification with the audience.

107 The phrase *καθὼς δὲ ἤγγιζεν ὁ χρόνος*—*as the time drew near* (v. 17) indicates the circumstances in which God's promise is fulfilled. The phrase *Ἐν τῷ καιρῷ*—*it was at this time* (v. 20) indicates the agent by whom God had fulfilled His promise.

108 Philo, *De Vita Mosis* vol. 6, 1.21–22, LCL, (Cambridge—Massachusetts, 1966), 286–287.

109 Larsson sees here typology between Moses and Christ. E. Larsson, "Temple-Criticism and the Jewish Heritage: Some Reflexions on Acts 6–7," *NTS* 39 (1993): 387–388.

author's interpretation of Moses' position, seen in the light of Jesus' rejection.¹¹⁰ The third period starts with the revelation of God's angel on Mount Sinai (vv. 30–34).¹¹¹ Here Moses is presented as a pious Jew who knows the tradition and who is chosen by God to fulfil His will. The will of God concerns to free the Jews (v. 34), which will be done by God Himself, through the hands of Moses.¹¹²

At this point of the narrative Luke's Stephen in v. 35 presents the *propositio* of the speech, which underlines the idea that the one (Moses), who was rejected by his brethren (Ex 2,14), is chosen by God (Ex 3,5–8) and supported by His angel. This statement is crucial for understanding the meaning of the whole speech. Here for the first time Luke's Stephen points out that (like Joseph, Moses and Jesus) the one who is rejected by the people is in fact the one chosen by God.¹¹³

The following unit (Ac 7,36–50), which is the *argumentatio* in the narrative structure of the speech, consists of two sections that contain arguments proving that the nation rejected Moses, who had been chosen by God (vv. 36–43), and that God was with the nation long before the Temple was built (vv. 44–50). The first section (vv. 36–43) presents Moses as the liberator of the nation (v. 36) and the founder of the true religion (vv. 36–38).¹¹⁴ Moses was rejected by the people (v. 39), which led to the destruction of the nation by hand of God

110 Another addition Luke made in verse 23 (*he was mighty in his words and deeds*), which is similar to the description of Jesus in Lk 24,9.

111 The account of the Jews' dwelling in Egypt ends at v. 34, but the story of Moses continues until v. 43. The account of the theophany on the Mount Sinai is based on Ex 3,1–10, but it contains some modifications. When Ex 3,2 speaks of "the angel of the Lord", Stephen speaks only about the angel (v. 30). In verse 31, Stephen adds the psychical reaction of Moses, which is missing in Ex 3,3. In verse 32, Stephen omits "*I am*" in the phrase ἐγὼ ὁ θεός—I, God.

112 Luke's combines several fragments from Ex 3,7–8,10, in vv. 33–34.

113 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 128–129. Here again the *topos* of Moses is used in order to indirectly indicate the statement concerning Jesus.

114 According to Luke's Stephen, Moses plays the most significant role in the process of creating the belief that God dwells among His people. Moses is redeemer of the nation, who proved his leadership by the deeds, miracles and signs during whole time in his service to God (v. 36). Moses is a prophet, who foretells the coming of another prophet like he was (v. 37). This prophecy, which is a quotation from Deut 18,15, refers to Jesus, according to Luke's narrative structure. Moses is the agent in relation between God and the nation, by whom God delivered to His people the word of life (the Law). Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 380. Half of the Stephen's speech refers to Moses (Ac 7,17–44). In the speech, Stephen shows his conviction that the Jews did not accept Moses as an agent of God, sent to the people of Israel (Ac 7,25,35,38–39), which in Luke's narrative concept serves as the *topos* for rejection of Jesus.

(v. 43b) due to their idolatry (vv. 40–43a). The rejection of Moses was the rejection of the Law, which he received from God and delivered to the nation. The consequence of the rejection of Moses (the Law) was a turn back to idolatry and abandoning the worship of the true God. This attitude was the reason for the destruction of the nation during the Babylonian period, which took place generations after the rejection of Moses. The conclusion of the argument in this section shows that rejection of Moses resulted in departure from true worship and ultimately led to the destruction of the nation.¹¹⁵ Those, who had rejected Moses, were rejected by God who let them to be victims of their own decision. In this way the Lukan Stephen makes a general statement that rejection of the God's servants leads to the destruction of the nation.

The second section concerns the presence of God among the nation (vv. 44–50). Although the nation chose “*to carry the tent of Moloch*”, Moses from the very beginning gave the nation the tent of Testimony, which was with people (vv. 44–45) until the times of king Solomon, who built the Temple (vv. 46–47).¹¹⁶ The section starts with information on setting the tent of the Testimony and it ends with the establishing of the Temple in Jerusalem.¹¹⁷ This is quite intentional, since from the beginning one of the aims of Stephen's speech is to underline those moments in Jewish history, where God is seen to be dwelling among His chosen nation. In Stephen's speech this topic emerges with the faith of Abraham and ends with establishing the Temple in Jerusalem. Those to whom Stephen delivered the speech are deeply convinced that God is present in the Holy of Holies. Their theology is centred on the concept of the Temple as being the locus of God's dwelling among the people. For them Stephen's statement in v. 48 was nothing less than blasphemy and proof of the accusation against him, mentioned in Ac 6,13–14. For Stephen, however, this was

115 Concerning the destruction of the nation (Ac 7,42–43), Luke's Stephen uses the Book of Amos in LXX version (Amos 5,25–27), in which the account is modified from the particular case of the destruction of the Northern Kingdom by the Assyrians to the universal case of destruction of the whole nation by the Babylonians. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 272.

116 Verse 46 contains a textual difficulty in the two different readings (*house of Jacob* and *God of Jacob*), both of which can be found in major witnesses. For details see B.M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London—New York: Nelson, 1984), 351–353.

117 Concerning the tent of Testimony, Luke informs us that it was designed according to God's order given to Moses (v. 44), to watch over the Promised Land (and set up in Shiloh—1 Sam 2,22), where it stayed until the time (2 Sam 6,17) of King David (v. 45), who despite the desire to build the Temple was not allowed to do so (v. 46). It was David's son, Solomon (1 Kings 5,1–7,51), who built the Temple (v. 47).

not blasphemy.¹¹⁸ As a Greek-speaking Jew he is convinced that God does not dwell only in the Temple (Ac 7,48–50), and his conviction (not isolated) was probably based on a common prophetic movement within Judaism, which was critical of the Temple (Is 66,1–2). God is with the nation but His presence is not restricted to residing in the Temple. Considering the end of Stephen's speech (Ac 7,51–53), it is possible to propose that the issue, to which Stephen here refers, concerns the presence of the word of life (v. 38) in human hearts, rather than God dwelling only in the Temple. Stephen does not say that God does not dwell in the Temple, neither has he said that God dwells only in the Temple. The problem to which he refers concerns idolatrous approaches to the Temple, which make it impossible to listen to the word of God and to obey it. The simple and true faith of Abraham, Joseph and Moses made them true servants of God, in contrast institutionalised religion closed the heart of people closed to prophets like Moses (Jesus), whom they rejected. In this way Stephen prepared the ground for the *peroratio* (vv. 51–53), which contains a charge against the audience (including the Sanhedrin). Stephen, instead of defending himself against the accusation of speaking against Moses and God (Ac 6,11), accuses those assembled of disobeying God, which led them to a kind of idolatry. In uncompromising words he called them a stiff-necked people, whose hearts and ears do not obey God's words (v. 51). Verse 51 contains three accusations, gradually rising in force, which illustrate the Lukan Stephen's evaluation of contemporary Judaism. The first accusation "*you stubborn people*" refers to the lack of an attitude of obedience to God and His servant, in the same manner as their ancestors did.¹¹⁹ The second accusation "*uncircumcised in heart and ears*" refers to the spiritual attitude of the Jews, which does not differ from the attitude of Gentiles. It does not mean that they do not have faith (in a religious sense), but it means that they behave like those who have no faith. This accusation was commonly used by the prophets, who struggled to call the nation to repentance.¹²⁰ The third accusation concerns their constantly resisting the Holy Spirit (v. 51), which is an attitude identical to that characteristic

118 It may seem that Stephen proved that the accusation (Ac 6,14) against him was true, however, his statement concerns a general concept of God developed by the prophets (Is 66,1–2) and it does not refer to Jesus' action against the Temple and the Law.

119 The phrase "*you stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears*" appears in Ex 33,3–5, 34,9, Deut 9,6,13, Prov 29,11, Ba 2,30 in exact wording, and in similar meaning appears also in Ex 32,9, 2 Kings 17,14, 2 Chron 30,8, 36,13, Neh 9,16–17,29, Is 48,4, 7,26, 17,23, 19,15, 1 Ezra 1,48.

120 See Deut 10,16, Ezek 44,7–9, Jer 4,4, 6,10, 9,26, Neh 9,16–17. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 384–385.

of their ancestors towards the prophets (v. 52).¹²¹ Their ancestors killed prophets, including those who spoke of the coming of the Righteous One (v. 52a).¹²² Now the Righteous One (Jesus) has come, and they have betrayed and killed Him (v. 52b).¹²³ This leads Stephen to conclude that although they possess the Law from the angels (by the hand of Moses), they do not act according to the Law (v. 53).¹²⁴ In fact, Stephen's accusations strongly imply that the people, who accused him, are not the true people of God, rather they are like those who opposed Moses. Stephen did not speak against the Temple or against the Law, however he spoke against his accusers, who are living and acting contrary to the Law.

These accusations caused offense and aroused the anger of Stephen's accusers (Ac 7,54), but it was not this that brought about Stephen's doom. The direct reason for the violent reaction of the crowd against Stephen was his declaration: "*Look! I can see heaven thrown open [...] and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God,*" which was understood as being blasphemous. It seems that this claim of a vision and not the speech itself was the direct reason for Stephen's stoning (v. 57). The account concerning the stoning contains two statements by Stephen, both of which are similar to those used in the description of Jesus' death (Lk 23,34=Ac 7,60; Lk 23,46=Ac 7,59).¹²⁵ With these Luke draws a parallel between Stephen and Jesus.¹²⁶ In Ac 7,60 he shows that Stephen's trust in Jesus is of the same nature of Jesus' trust in God; and in Ac 7,59 he show that followers of Jesus follow His example and forgive those who sinned against them. Both sentences show Stephen as being a perfect disciple of Jesus.

121 The use of the term ἀντιπύω—*resist, oppose* recalls the use of the same term in Num 27,14 referring to Israel resistance in the wilderness. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1423–1425.

122 In verse 52, Stephen presents argumentation for his accusation (v. 51), which refers to the wrongdoing of the ancestors and the wrongdoing of the present generation.

123 The accusation is made directly without any mention of their ignorance (Ac 4,10, 5,30). In the context of the ancestors, who opposed God by rejecting the prophets of God, this accusation puts direct responsibility of Jesus' death on all Israelites, who rejected Him. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 134.

124 The conclusion is a final judgment of Stephen upon the Israelites who accuse him about acting against God and Moses (Ac 6,11). In this way the Lukan Stephen from a position of accused person shifted to the position of an accuser.

125 H.J. Combrink, "*Structural Analysis of Acts 6:8–8:3*," *StThSt 4* (Cape Town: Dutch Reformed Church Publishers, 1979), 22.

126 M.D. Goulder, *Type and History in Acts* (London: SPCK Publishing, 1964), 42–43; C.H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 66–67.

C.3 *The Function of the Speech*

Of all the speeches in Acts this presents the greatest difficulty in any attempt to determine its function. Scholarly opinion is roughly divided into two camps, which are both attempts to come to terms with Dibelius' interpretation of the speech.¹²⁷ He advanced the opinion that the speech is in fact irrelevant to the accusation made against Stephen, and that the speech is fundamentally a critique of the Temple and the Law.

The first opinion we have found to be unsubstantiated, since the accusation includes Stephen speaking against Moses and God (Ac 6,11) and claiming that Jesus would destroy the Temple and change the Law of Moses (Ac 6,14), while Stephen's speech contains a very positive evaluation of Moses (Ac 7,35) and the Law (Ac 6,38.53).¹²⁸ Stephen in his speech refers to the accusation but not in form of self-defence; while offering a positive evaluation of the subjects mention in the accusation, he goes on the offensive accusing his accusers about acting against God and Moses.¹²⁹ Here we share the opinion of Tannehill that the speech fits perfectly into Luke's narrative.¹³⁰ The speech should not be analysed separately from the two previous speeches concerning the relation between the disciples and the Sanhedrin (Ac 5,29–32.35–39), because the speech is a climax of the narrative concerning the circumstances that led to the wide-scale persecution of the followers of Jesus (Ac 8,1–3, 9,1–30). The first speech (Ac 5,29–32) is defensive and it contains an apology for the decision of the Twelve. The end of the speech (v. 32) shows that the Twelve consider themselves to be those who obey the Holy Spirit. The second speech (Ac 5,35–39) ends with a forceful claim that the Jesus-movement comes from God (v. 39) and that opposition to the movement can be understood as opposition to God. The third speech (Ac 7,2–53.56.59–60) ends with an accusation, starting with the statement that the Jews, who accused and judged Stephen, are resisting the Holy Spirit, like their ancestors did towards the God's prophets (v. 51). Before Stephen made this accusation, he had pointed to many cases in the history of Israel that prove his statement (Ac 7,8–43). Luke's narrative reaches the desired aim: by opposing the Twelve, Israelites do not obey the Holy Spirit and do not

127 Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, (London: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), 167–169.

128 Concerning the argument that the speech does not contain any "temple-criticism", see Larsson, "Temple-Criticism and the Jewish Heritage," 379–395.

129 This attitude should not surprise us if we keep in mind the fact that Luke presents the accusation as being false (Ac 6,11.13).

130 Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, vol. 2, 84–101.

respect the God's Law.¹³¹ Surprisingly, this criticism, although not warmly welcomed (Ac 7,54), does not lead directly to the persecution, which may suggest that this criticism was somehow accepted.¹³²

Concerning the second opinion it must be said that there is no proof in the speech to support the idea that Stephen is critical of the Law. On the contrary, his attitude towards the Law is entirely positive (Ac 6,38.53). Much more must to be said in order to prove that Stephen's speech is not critical of the Temple. The section concerning this problem (Ac 7,44–49) includes v. 48, which usually serves as an argument that the speech is actually critical of the Temple. The thought presented in v. 48 is supported by a quotation from Is 66,1–2, which takes a general rather than a particular character.¹³³ Literally the text says: *but the Most High does not live in [...] human hands have built*, what naturally requires the addition of an object, and this object depends on our interpretation of the first part of the section (Ac 7,44–46).¹³⁴ The previous section concerns Moses after the exodus (Ac 7,36–43) and is mostly centred on Israel's disobedience towards Moses, ending with a quotation (Am 5,25–27), which contains the statement that Israel carried the tent of Moloch (v. 43). Ac 7,44–50 begins with the statement that God ordered Moses to build the Tent of Testimony, which was the beginning of a developing tradition that would finally lead to the building of the Temple (vv. 44–47). This is presented in a very positive way, without being in any way critical. For that reason v. 48 should not be interpreted as a criticism because such would not fit with the context of the account. Verses 49–50 are a quotation from Is 66,1–2, in which the first part (vv. 1–2a) is a general statement that God transcends human realities, including the sacred buildings. This statement is followed by v. 2b: *“But my eyes are drawn to the person of humbled and contrite spirit, who trembles at my word.”* This shows that the focus is not on the Temple but on the true believers. Those who were reading Luke's account of Stephen's speech would be well aware of the truth of this statement. For this reason, Luke's Stephen in the next verse begins with a very strong accusation against those Israelites who have the Temple of God but who do not have the Spirit of God.¹³⁵

131 The base for this idea is their rejection of Christ (Ac 5,30.52).

132 The direct reason for Stephen's death is presented in vv. 56–57.

133 ἄλλ' οὐχ ὁ ὕψιστος ἐν χειροποιήτοις κατοικεῖ—*but the Most High does not live in [...] human hands have built*.

134 Usually a word “temple” or “house” is added.

135 This interpretation, in our opinion, may help to solve the problem of unity between the part concerning Moses and the part concerning the Temple, as well as the part concerning the Temple and the part concerning the accusation.

In conclusion: in our opinion the idea that the speech's purpose is a criticism of the Temple or of the Law does not find support in the content of the speech. The speech has both a narrow function and a wider function in the narrative structure of the Acts. By a narrow function we understand the function of Ac 7,2–53. It is that the Israelites who reject Jesus do not obey God. They have the Temple, where God is dwelling, but they do not have the Spirit of God. This assertion by the Lukan Stephen is not new.¹³⁶ By the wider function we understand the function, which the speech takes within the whole section of the three speeches concerning the conflict between the Twelve and the Sanhedrin. The Twelve are those who obey the Holy Spirit by the fact that they believe in Jesus (as is presented in the first speech in Ac 5,29–32), but the Israelites, who rejected Jesus, are opposing the Holy Spirit (in the third speech in Ac 7,2–56). This is the main function the speech.

In Luke's narrative (Ac 7,2–53) the Sanhedrin did not pronounce the sentence of death (as also in the previous case of the apostles—Ac 5,17–40). The speech of Stephen (Ac 7,2–53) only aroused the anger of the Sanhedrin, but not the penalty of death (Ac 7,54). The stoning of Stephen was an impulsive action in reaction to the revelation of Stephen, which was considered to be blasphemy. Stephen's stoning was the start of a persecution against the disciples, which led to their escape from Jerusalem, and this opened a new chapter in the history of proclaiming the name of Jesus (Ac 8,1). Taking into consideration the beginning of chapter 8 of Acts, it seems that the end of the speech (v. 56) offers a reason for a systematic persecution of Jesus' believers in Jerusalem (Ac 8,1–3, 9,1–30). This reason was that one of Jesus' believers, Stephen, proclaimed Jesus to be the one who stands at the right hand of God (which *de facto* means that Jesus is God). Those who did not believe in Jesus considered these words to be the blasphemy that was spreading among Jesus' disciples. Those who first challenged Stephen were Hellenistic Jews, who did not believe in Jesus. The conflict, which arose among the Hellenistic Jews in Jerusalem, led to the trial before the Sanhedrin. During that trial Stephen gave a speech, which was not appreciated by the audience and was even considered to be offensive. At that point, however, they were still in control of their anger. This control, however, was lost when they heard the account of Stephen's revelation. It seems that although the Hebrew Jews were participants at the trial and the stoning, Luke specifically points to the fact that whole problem started among Hellenistic

136 Wilson points here to close parallels between Stephen's trial and the account of the trial of Jesus. S.G. Wilson, *The Gentiles and the Gentile mission in Luke-Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 130.

Jews rather than Hebrew Jews.¹³⁷ This accords with Luke's presentation of Saul, the Diaspora Jew, as being the main agent of the persecution.

2 In Judea and Samaria

Luke's account concerning the mission in Judea and Samaria (Ac 8,4–12,25) contains only one group of topical speeches (Ac 8,20–23, 10,28–29.34–43.47, 11,5–17), which concern the gift of the Holy Spirit as being the main sign proving the acceptability of the mission to Gentiles.¹³⁸

A *The Speech of Peter to Simon (Ac 8, 20–23)*

With Ac 8,4, Luke turns to his account of the mission outside Jerusalem, which is the next stage of his narrative concept. It begins with the mission activities of Philip, Peter and John, all of which met with undoubted success, with the exception of the case of Simon. The inclusion of this particular case by Luke seems to be intended to convey an important message to his readers.

The text of Ac 8, 20–23

²⁰ Peter said to him “May your silver perish with you for thinking that God’s gift can be bought with money! ²¹ You have no share or part in part in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. ²² Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord, that, if possible, you may be forgiven the thought of your heart; ²³ for I see that you have fallen into the bitterness and into the bond of iniquity.”

A.1 *The Structural Analysis of the Speech*

The speech of Peter to Simon is the first speech of the three (Ac 8,20–23, 10,28–29.34–43, 11,5–16) that concern the mission in Judea and Samaria. The preceding context concerns the mission by Philip (Ac 8,4–13) and Peter (Ac 8,14–25) in Samaria. The first apostle who brought Jesus’ message to the Samaritans was Philip (v. 5). His mission is presented as a success (vv. 12–13), shown by the fact that Samaritans turn away from magic and enthusiastically accepted the Gospel. Among those who begin to believe in Jesus was Simon the magician, who was an eminent person before Philip came to the city (vv. 9–11), but now is robbed of his position, when the Samaritans saw the signs of God’s power

¹³⁷ Although the conflict between the Twelve and the Sanhedrin led to the punishment of the Twelve, however it did not involve the penalty of death.

¹³⁸ In this section Luke makes extensive use of dialogue.

(vv. 6–7) and stopped believing in Simon's magic (v. 12).¹³⁹ After the Samaritans had turned from magic to believing in Jesus, Peter and John started their mission in Samaria (vv. 14–17), preparing the inhabitants for receiving the Holy Spirit (vv. 15–17). The request of Simon, who wanted to buy the power of giving the Holy Spirit (vv. 18–19), is the immediate reason for the speech of Peter.

In the account following the speech (Ac 8,26–40) we learn of Philip's mission on the road between Jerusalem and Gaza, which led to the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians (v. 27).¹⁴⁰ The account concerns the reception of Jesus' Gospel by a non-Jew.¹⁴¹

This short speech has a chiasmic structure (A, B, B¹, A¹), where A is a v. 20; B is v. 21; B¹ is v. 22; A¹ is v. 23. The structure shows that the main theme of the speech concerns the rejection of Simon.

A.2 The Meaning of the Speech

Simon (Ac 8,9), who became a believer of Jesus (v. 13),¹⁴² saw that by hands of Peter and John those who believed received the Holy Spirit (v. 18). He recognised it as a great gift, which he thought could be bought from Peter and John. He offered money in order to receive the power that they had received as a free gift from God (v. 19). Before Philip and later Peter and John came to Samaria, Simon was a respected magician, whom people recognised as having great power from God (v. 10).¹⁴³ Most probably he made good profit from this (vv. 9–11). However, he lost both reputation and profit when people became be-

139 R.P. Casey, "Simon Magus," in *The Acts of the Apostles. Additional Notes to the Commentary*, part 1 of *The Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. 5 (London: Macmillan, 1933), 151–163; J.M.D. Derrett, "Simon Magus (Acts 8,9–24)," *ZNW* 73 (1982): 52–68; W.A. Meeks, "Simon Magus in Recent Research," *RSR* 3 (1977): 137–142.

140 This first personal conversion is following by an account concerning the conversion of Saul (Ac 9,1–19).

141 According to Deut 23,2 the eunuch was precluded from full participation in the assembly, however Is 56,4–5 proclaims that the eunuch, who keeps the Sabbath and obeys the Law will, be accepted by God. Since the eunuch was Ethiopian and Ethiopia (alongside with Assyria and Babylonia) is mentioned among the countries in Isaiah prophecy concerning the restoration of the people (Is 11,11), the account of an Ethiopian's conversion and the account of the mission in Samaria may be recognised as mission to those, who once had been the part of the people (those who have the Jewish roots or somehow were related to Judaism) but now have been lost. If it is the case, the narration concerning the mission in Samaria must be interpreted in non-strict geographical sense. The mission is addressed to those, who once were in the covenant but have departed or were excluded from it.

142 There is no indication that Simon himself had received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

143 Here, Luke indirectly indicates that the Samaritans' religion, although still monotheistic, was quite removed from the orthodoxy of Judaism.

lievers in Jesus as a result of Philip's preaching. He thought that by possessing the power to give the Holy Spirit to people he would be restored to his influential position. The request of Simon met with Peter's sharp condemnation of the notion that the gift of God can be bought (v. 20).¹⁴⁴ In contrast with magic or sorcery, which were performed for the profit to those who were able to buy it, the miracle is a free gift given to those whose were recognised by God to be worthy of this gift.¹⁴⁵ Here, Simon's basic idea is that of controlling the power of God and not being subordinate to it (v. 9), which forced Peter to curse him, an appropriate response to a sorcerer.¹⁴⁶ In verse 21, Peter gives his categorical rejection of Simon's request (*You have no share, no part, in this*) and he presents an argument for that (*for your heart is not right before God*). The terms *μερίς*—*part, share* are synonymous and strongly deny that Simon has any share (*κλήρος*) in the ministry of Peter and John or any part (*μερίς*) in baptising people with the Holy Spirit (v. 17). Peter argues that the gift can be granted to those whose hearts are right before God, however that is not the case with Simon, who instead of true conversion attempts a kind of syncretism.¹⁴⁷ The way of thinking characteristic of Simon is a sin that may be forgiven if repentance is shown (v. 22). Peter calls Simon (v. 23) to repentance and to show real conversion by changing his way of thinking, in language similar to Ac 2,38 and Ac 3,19.¹⁴⁸ The phrase ἄρα ἀφεθήσεται σοι—*may be forgiven you* shows the strong doubt Peter holds concerning possibility of Simon's conversion.¹⁴⁹ Simon, like many Samaritans, was baptised, but contrary to his countrymen (vv. 16–17) he did not really change his way of thinking and living. Baptism has changed nothing in his heart and mind (v. 23). Probably, he had only tried to settle into the new circumstances in which his former work was no longer prospering.

144 The phrase "God's gift" refers to the gift of the Holy Spirit, as Ac 2,38 indicates, which is given by God but cannot be taken or bought from God. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 149.

145 A.M. Reimer, *Miracle and Magic: A Study in the Acts of the Apostles and the "Life of Apollonius of Tyana"*, JSNTSS 235 (London: T&T Clark, 2002), 139–141.

146 The term ἀπώλεια—*destruction* used in optative expresses a wish of final destruction (similar to Prov 27,20, Is 33,2, Ezek 26,19–21). Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 222. Scholars interprets the term as curse formula (Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 66), excommunication (I.H. Marshall, *Kept by the Power of God: A Study in Perseverance and Falling Away* [Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1974], 97) or judgment (D.K. Williams, "The Acts of the Apostles," in *True to Our Native Land: An African American New Testament Commentary*, ed. B.K. Blount [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007], 213–248).

147 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1529.

148 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 149.

149 Note the striking similarity to case of Ananias (Ac 5,1–5).

The phrase *χολήν πικρίας*—*gall of bitterness* condemn one who was guilty of breaking the covenant (Prov 5,4) or idolatry (Deut 29,17). The phrase *σύνδεσμον ἀδικίας*—*chains of sin* shows the real state of Simon, who still belongs to the world of injustice.¹⁵⁰ These two phrases show Peter's strongly negative evaluation of Simon's condition.

This short speech shows one of the dangers, that of dishonest intention, which the apostles met during the mission outside Jerusalem.¹⁵¹

A.3 The Function of the Speech

The speech opens a section in Luke's narration concerning the mission in Judea and Samaria, which on the one hand (Luke's narrative concept) is a realisation of Jesus' command (Ac 1,8) and on the other hand (historical circumstances) is a consequence of the persecution that occurred in Jerusalem (Ac 7,54–8,3). The mission outside Jerusalem began in Samaria region, whose inhabitants had once been Jews, but in the time of the apostles Jews from Jerusalem hardly recognised them as Jews, and at the best of times possibly considered them as half-brothers. The mission is addressed to those who were lost from the house of Israel. The supervision of the mission lies with the community in Jerusalem, who sent Peter and John to Samaria (Ac 8,14) after hearing about Phillip's success (Ac 5–13). Although, the words of the Gospel and the signs of God's power made many of them convert by changing their way of thinking, however not all of those who were baptised gave up their past lives. The case of Simon, which can be taken as an example, shows that there were those, who would sought to blend their old habits and beliefs with the kerygma of the apostles.¹⁵² The speech focuses in particular on magic, whose characteristic claim is that it controls spiritual power rather than obey it. Simon wanted to possess the gift in the only way he knew, namely, by buying it, but this gift was granted to the apostles because of the uprightness of their hearts before God. The account points to the problem of the dishonest intention of those who become the followers of Jesus not in order to serve God, but for their own personal gain. Peter's reaction indicates that there is not room among the believers in Jesus for this kind of attitude. The speech indicates a mission problem encountered in Samaria, where there was a tendency to blend an idolatrous attitude (magic) with belief

150 In Is 58, 6 the righteousness one will “*release the bonds of injustice*”.

151 In the account concerning the mission in Jerusalem there is the case of Ananias and Sapphira (Ac 5,1–11), which refers to a similar problem.

152 C.K. Barrett, “Light on the Holy Spirit from Simon Magus (Acts 8,4–25),” in *Les Actes des Apôtres: traditions, rédaction, théologie*, ed. J. Kremer (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979), 281–295.

in the true God. However, the main function of the speech concerns the gift of the Holy Spirit and those, who are not worthy to receive the gift although they desire to obtain it. The gift is restricted to those who truly believe in Jesus the Messiah, and it is kind of sign attesting their faith (Ac 8,15–17). Luke presents Simon as the man, who asked not for the gift of the Holy Spirit, but to receive the power to give the gift of the Holy Spirit, what means he attempted to control the divine power.¹⁵³ Since the next two speeches (Ac 10,28–29,34–43,47, 11,5–17) concern extraordinary cases of receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit by those, who have not yet be baptised, the case of Simon indicates that baptism without true faith is not sufficient for receiving the gift promised by God.

B *Speech of Peter in the House of Cornelius (Ac 10, 28–29. 34–43. 47)*

Luke continues his narrative concerning the mission in Judea and Samaria. After the account concerning Samaritans (Ac 8,4–25) and mission of Philip (Ac 8,26–40), he now turns to an account concerning the mission among Gentiles living in Judea (Ac 10,1–11,18).¹⁵⁴ In order to make the mission possible, due to the Jewish prohibition of associating with Gentiles, it was necessary to find a reason, which would serve as an excuse for breaking an old crucial Jewish custom that was still maintained by the Twelve. This makes the speech (Ac 10,28–29,34–43,47) a fascinating unit in Luke's narrative, and it serves an important function in this section of Acts.¹⁵⁵

The text of Ac 10, 28–29. 34–43. 47

²⁸ You are know that it is forbidden for a Jew to be intimate with or visit a foreigner, yet God has shown me that I ought not to call anyone unholy or unclean. ²⁹ That is why I came without raising any objection, when I was sent for. And now I ask your reason for sending for me.

³⁴ I now really understand that God does not show partiality, ³⁵ but that in every nation he who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶ You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching

¹⁵³ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 288–290.

¹⁵⁴ The account concerning the mission in Samaria and Judea is interrupted by Ac 9 containing the account of Saul's conversion and the beginning of his neophyte's life, which in our opinion belongs to different narrative layer. A problem of narrative layers in the Acts of Apostle will be discussed later in chapter four.

¹⁵⁵ Wilson points out the fact that no other speech receives such epic treatment as this speech in Luke's narrative (*The Gentiles and the Gentile mission in Luke-Acts*, 177). Dodd is convinced that the speech has Aramaic origin and it comes from the Jerusalem source (*The Apostolic Preaching*, 25–26).

peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all! ³⁷ You yourselves know the word that spread through all Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism, which John preached. ³⁸ [The word] how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how he went about doing good and curing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. ³⁹ We are witnesses to all that he did in Judea and in Jerusalem; yet they put him to death by hanging him on a cross. ⁴⁰ Yet on the third day God raised him to life and allowed him to be seen, ⁴¹ not indeed to everyone, but to us, the witnesses chosen beforehand by God, who ate and drank with him after his resurrection from the dead. ⁴² God charged us to proclaim to the people, and solemnly affirm, that it is he, who has been appointed by God judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives through his name forgiveness of sins.

⁴⁷ Can any one forbid water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?

B.1 *The Structural Analysis of the Speech*

The speech is placed in the context of Peter's mission activities among Gentiles in Judea (Ac 10,1–11,30).¹⁵⁶ This is the second speech in the section concerning the mission in Judea and Samaria (Ac 8,4–12), and it confronts a problem of the relationship between Jews believing in Jesus and Gentiles living in Judea.

Preceding the speech, Luke narrates on the one hand the revelation to Cornelius (the Gentile) and on the other hand the revelation to Peter, which led to their meeting in Caesarea (Ac 10,1–8, 9–23). Having established the context of the speech, Luke then records Peter's apology for his action in the house of Cornelius (Ac 11,1–18), the third speech of the section (Ac 11,5–17).

The speech consists of two units, where Ac 10,28–29 is preparatory unit and Ac 10,34–43 is the main part of the speech. The main subject of the first unit is Peter, who in obedience to God breaks the Law by visiting the Gentiles (v. 28a). He insists that it is God who changed his way of thinking concerning the relationship of Jews with non-Jews (v. 28b). He indicates that he is doing the will of God without any objection (v. 29a), however he is still suspicious concerning

¹⁵⁶ Luke's account concerning the mission in Samaria referred to those, who departed from the house of Israel (Samaritans), but the account concerning Peter mission in Caesarea refers to those who are not Jews (the Gentiles) but living among Jews. Caesarea was a city inhabited not only by Jews but also by Gentiles, including Syrians and Romans (*Bell.* 2.266–268, 3.409). G. Lease, "The Caesarea Mithraeum: A Preliminary Announcement," *BA* 38 (1975): 2–10.

the reason for Cornelius' action (v. 29b). In this unit a chiastic structure can be seen (A—v. 28a; B—v. 28b; B¹—v. 29a; A¹—v. 29b). The structure shows that obedience to God is the central theme.

The main speech (Ac 10,34–43) is given in deliberative rhetoric, whose purpose is to persuade the audience to accept Jesus.¹⁵⁷ However, to distinguish the particular parts of rhetorical structure is difficult due to the fact that the speech seems to be unfinished and is interrupted by the event, which we call the Pentecost of the Gentiles (vv. 44–46). Despite these difficulties, we offer the following rhetorical structure.¹⁵⁸ The first part of the speech is the *exordium* (vv. 34–35), which with a general statement on the one hand relates back to the preparatory part of the speech (vv. 28–29), and on other hand lays the ground for the *narratio* of the main part of the speech (vv. 36–42). The *narratio* of the speech contains a kerygma concerning Jesus as a chosen servant of God (vv. 36–42). The next verse (v. 43) is a *propositio*, which without quoting any specific sources states that all the prophets taught about salvation in the name of Jesus as a reality concerning all peoples. At that point the speech seems to be interrupted by the event of the Holy Spirit coming down on all the listeners (vv. 44–46). However, the account of the event serves as the *argumentatio* for the *propositio* (v. 43), thus offering proof by means of an event instead of giving a logical argumentation. If this is so, v. 47 serves as the *peroratio*, which takes the form of a rhetorical question and concerns the legitimacy for Gentiles of baptism in the name of Jesus.

The main subject of the second unit (Ac 10,34–43) is God in action, who through Jesus fulfils His plan of salvation. First, Peter confesses faith in God as being the God of all peoples (vv. 34–35). Next, he states that God has informed the chosen people (v. 36) that he is making peace with people through the works of Jesus, who was made Lord of all humankind (v. 36). After that, Peter gives a short account of Jesus' ministry under the power of the Holy Spirit given to Him by God (vv. 37–38a). The last section (vv. 38b–43) refers to the apostles as the witnesses who must proclaiming that God raised Jesus from the dead (vv. 39–41a), and who must proclaim Jesus as the judge and the redeemer of all people appointed by God (vv. 41b–43).

157 Kennedy refers to this as epideictic rhetoric. See G.A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 123–124. Bauckham recognises verses 36–42 as the one of the major kerygma summaries ("Kerygmatic Summary in the Speeches of Acts," 213).

158 Concerning the problem, see Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1794–1795.

B.2 *The Meaning of the Speech*

After the presentation of the reason, which caused Jesus' disciples to leave Jerusalem with haste and undertake mission activities in Samaria, Luke turns to an account concerning the mission to Gentiles living in Judea.¹⁵⁹ This mission confronted a major obstacle in the Jewish custom of not having relations with Gentiles (Ac 10,1–12,25).¹⁶⁰ Peter's speech in the house of Cornelius is a turning point in the relations between the two groups. As a basis for his presentation of the problem Luke chose a vision by Peter and a revelation made to Cornelius, both of which were clearly of divine origin (Ac 10,1–24). It was God's work that Cornelius sent for Peter, just as it was God's work that Peter accepted the invitation of Cornelius. The account of Peter's speech begins with Peter's presentation of the Jewish custom, which strictly prohibited relationship with Gentiles (Ac 10,28a).¹⁶¹ This prohibition, however, is challenged by Peter's statement based on God's will revealed to him in a vision (Ac 10,9–16). According to Peter's new conviction there is nothing profane or unclean in man (Ac 10,28b). The vision of Peter concerned unclean food, however Peter interprets it to include human beings, leading him to state that it is inappropriate to evaluate people based on their customs. The shift is striking, since it makes no distinction between Jews and Gentiles in their capacity to believe. This conviction, which is the effect of God's intervention, became the sufficient reason for Peter to break Jewish custom in order to fulfil the will of God (Ac 10,19–21,29a). Yet, although Peter obeyed God's will, he remained ill-at-ease with the situation and for this reason he raised questions, which shows some suspicions on his part concerning the purpose of this invitation (v. 29b). This

159 There was a large population of Gentiles living in Judea and Samaria, especially in cities built by Herod and his family in honour of Caesar. For more information on the ethnical map of Palestine see T. Rajak, "The Location of Cultures in Second Temple Palestine: The Evidence of Josephus," in *Palestinian Setting*, vol. 4 of *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, ed. R. Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 1–14.

160 The prohibition did not cover all interactions with Gentiles, which would have made it impossible for the Jews to live among them, but it refers to those kinds of interactions, which would result in making the Jews ritually unclean. It specially refers to matters of food, hospitality and sharing table. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 209–210.

161 Here, Peter refers to the prohibition to accept hospitality in a Gentile's house, what makes his statement very radical, since neither the Law nor even custom did prohibit entering a Gentiles house under some conditions concerning food. Entering the house of Gentiles did not make Jews unclean, however eating unclean food or long-term association or acceptance of Gentile rituals would make them unclean. M. Bockmuehl, *Jewish Law in Gentile Churches: Halakhah and the Beginning of Christian Public Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 58. See also, Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1787–1792.

first preparatory unit of the Peter's speech indicates that both sides, following God's order, are going to interact, although on both sides there still remain prejudices and stereotypes.

After receiving an explanation from Cornelius, which clearly indicates a readiness to hear the kerygma (Ac 10,33), Peter confesses his understanding of true meaning of the vision, which refers to the fact that God shows no partiality.¹⁶² The God of Israel is God of all people, and He accepts men according to their fear of God and their righteous works (Ac 10,34–35).¹⁶³ This conviction overcomes all ethnic and religious limitations regarding God's attitude towards His creation.¹⁶⁴ Verse 36 starts the *narratio* of the speech (Ac 10,36–42), which contains the kerygma about Jesus, presented in a form acceptable to the Gentiles.¹⁶⁵ The Lukan Peter starts with basic statement that God sent the message of peace first to Israelites, and it has been realised in Jesus' deeds (Ac 10,36).¹⁶⁶ It indicates that Jesus was first sent to the Jews, and as the Messiah his task concerns proclaiming the good news about peace, which should be understood as the messianic blessing.¹⁶⁷ Peter promptly adds that although

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- 162 Luke shares here Paul's conviction (Rom 2,11, Gal 2,6). Johnson thinks that Peter understood the meaning of the vision at the time of visiting Cornelius house and hearing Cornelius explanation (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 191).
- 163 Witherington rightly points out that "*the fear of God*" does not have a technical meaning here due to a fact that sentence refers to Jews and Gentiles (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 356). Luke has already (Ac 10,22) indicated the righteousness of Cornelius.
- 164 Considering the context of the speech in the mission to Gentiles, the meaning of v. 35 is limited to this mission to Gentiles and it does not refer to salvation apart from Jesus' teaching. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 83.
- 165 The contents of the kerygma does not differ from the kerygmatic speeches addressed to the Jews, however the presentation of the kerygma differs radically, since it has no polemic or apologetic context, it strictly concentrates on historical and dogmatic elements. This part of speech takes the shape of kerygma proclaimed to Gentiles, and it follows the outline presented in Mark's Gospel. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 212–213; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 194–195; R.J. Longenecker, "Acts," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. T. Longman and D.E. Garland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 881.
- 166 The text Ac 10,36–38 is very difficult, because of transition, syntax and text variants, what creates much confusion for translation and interpretation. Here, we will follow Johnson's interpretation (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 191–193). See also: H. Reisenfeld, "The Text of Acts X, 36," in *Text and Interpretation*, ed. E. Best and R. McL Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 191–194.
- 167 The peace pronounced by God to the Jews, refers to the call addressed to the Israelites to reconcile with God, and in this way to change the existing status of enmity. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1798. The peace as the messianic blessing is the Luke's theme (Lk 1,79, 2,14, 7,50, 8,48, 10,5–6, 19,38, 24,36, Ac 7,26, 9,31). Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 463–464.

Jesus was sent particularly to Jews, he is the Lord not only of Jews but of all people, who believe in Him. This statement should be interpreted in light of Lk 2,29–32, where Jesus is called light for Gentiles and glory for Israel. Jesus is Lord of all humankind, including Jews and Gentiles, what means that by his deeds he made peace not only between God and humankind, but also between the peoples, including Jews and Gentiles.¹⁶⁸ In verse 37, Peter expresses his conviction concerning Cornelius household's knowledge about Jesus' deeds. Three historical points are noted here: Jesus' mission began after the mission of John; it started in Galilee, it reached its zenith in Judea. A basis for his conviction could be the renown gained by Jesus throughout the whole region, or Philip's mission in Caesarea (Ac 8,40).¹⁶⁹ In the next verse (v. 38), the Lukan Peter offers the basic characteristics of the identity of Jesus naming three elements: God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit, He possessed power, He freed people from power of devil. The first characteristic indicates that Jesus was elected by God and it underlines His Messiahship. The second characteristic points to source of the power of Jesus, which is strictly related to His election. The third characteristic shows the empowered Messiah as the Saviour from evil's power, here represented by sickness or infirmity. The last statement, that God was with Him, emphasised God as the main agent of Jesus' ministry.¹⁷⁰ Peter and the Twelve are the eyewitnesses to Jesus' works (v. 39a), his death (v. 39b), and resurrection (Ac 10,40–41).¹⁷¹ Concerning the resurrection, Peter notes that not all people but only the chosen ones (the apostles) met the resurrected Jesus (v. 41).¹⁷² The mention of eating and drinking serves as an argument testifying

168 This is another of Paul's great themes (Rom 10, 12).

169 Some scholars interpret "*you know*" as an element of *captatio benevolentiae* (Witherington), or as a mere stereotypical phrase (Conzelmann).

170 E.J. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 501–502.

171 The expression "*in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem*" indicates the holistic character of Peter's testimony. Concerning the death of Jesus, Peter indicates the kind of death (crucifixion) but he does not name those, who caused His death (in general Jews). Concerning the resurrection, the Lukan Peter underlines that it was act of God, but he does not provide any reason for God's action. He also stresses the reality of Jesus' body after resurrection, and the fact that it took place three days after crucifixion (also in: Ac 10,40, 1 Cor 15,3). M. Wilcox, "Upon the Tree": Deut 21,22–23 in the New Testament," *JBL* 96 (1977): 85–99.

172 Here, Peter limits the witnesses to the apostles (see also Jn 14,21–23), however Lk 24,33 mentions also "and their companions", what extends the circle of witnesses. If the revelation of resurrected Jesus was not limited to the Twelve, why did the Lukan Peter make such limitation? The limitation corresponds to the Lukan narrative concept, where the Twelve are foundation for a new messianic society and they are also the addressees of Jesus' mission, the realisation of which is the main subject of the Luke's work (Ac 1,2–14).

the credibility of Jesus' resurrection.¹⁷³ Finally, Peter presents the most important element of kerygma, which has to be proclaimed by the Twelve, and it refers to Jesus being appointed by God as the judge of all people, both living and dead (v. 42).¹⁷⁴ Peter and the Twelve are the witnesses appointed by the risen Jesus to proclaim that by will of God, Jesus is the judge and the redeemer of all people, including Jews and Gentiles (Ac 10,43). The words of Peter are attested by the prophets, who proclaimed that in name of Jesus all who believe in Him would find forgiveness of their sins (Ac 1,43).¹⁷⁵

At this point, the speech seems to be interrupted by the event of the Holy Spirit coming down on the people gathered in Cornelius' house (Ac 10,44–46). However, as we claimed in the section concerning the structure of the speech, this part of the narrative serves as the *argumentatio* for the *propositio* (v. 43). Instead of Peter's words, there is an act of God (the Holy Spirit comes down on the Gentiles), which proves that the Gentiles gathered in Cornelius' house believe in Jesus. The last verse (v. 47), which is the *peroratio* of Peter's speech, offers a reason for baptism of the Gentiles. This rhetorical question shows that God accepted the Gentiles and He proved their faith in Jesus by giving them the power of Holy Spirit in the same manner as it happened to the Twelve, what proves that (at least for Peter) the baptism of the Gentiles who believe in Jesus, without any doubt, is the will of God.¹⁷⁶

B.3 *The Function of the Speech*

In Luke's narrative in Acts, the section Ac 8,4–12,25 refers to the mission of Jesus' disciples (with particular focus on the Twelve) in Judea and Samaria, which brought a new challenge for them. Although the mission to the lost of

The Lukan Peter presents to the Gentiles hearers a direct message that the apostles are trustworthy witnesses chosen by God to proclaim the kerygma about resurrected Jesus.

173 Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 214–215.

174 Peterson writes “this is the most explicit statement in Acts about Jesus' role as the universal judge” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 338).

175 The brief mention of the “all prophets” should be understood as a generalisation, since not all prophets spoke about messianic times. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1808–1809. Verse 43 is the *propositio* of the speech, which indicates faith as the way to obtain forgiveness (direct message), which de facto means the beginning of new life (conclusive message). Verses 44–46 although they are not part of the speech, in the narrative concept of Luke they serve as proof by evidence (instead of proof by arguments) for the *propositio* of verse 43.

176 J.C. O'Neill, “The Connection between Baptism and the Gift of the Spirit in Acts,” *JSNT* 63 (1996): 93–94. The baptism of the Gentiles in fact was the act of accepting Gentiles among the mostly Jewish group of Jesus' believers. It automatically raised the problem of association Jewish Christians, who were still deeply rooted in mainstream Judaism, with Gentile Christians.

the house of Israel (Samaritans) had its own difficulties, as the speech of Peter to Simon indicates (Ac 8,20–23), the real problem arose when the mission reached Gentiles living among Jews, which led to a problem of the acceptance of Gentiles into the group of Jesus' believers. The source of the problem was the Jewish custom prohibiting Jews to associate with Gentiles, which in fact was a matter of crucial importance for the self-identity of the Jews themselves. In Luke's narrative, the speech of Peter (Ac 10,28–29.34–43.47) serves as an answer to the question concerning the reason for accepting the Gentiles among the Jews believing in Jesus. The section preceding the speech shows that the initiative to associate the Jews and the Gentiles believing in Jesus was an act of God in regard to both sides, and not the result of their own deliberation and decision. Peter, obeying the will of God, went to Caesarea but he did not understand the purpose of this.¹⁷⁷ Even when he understood that God accepts not only Jews but also all people who fear Him and act righteously, he did not yet relate this to the baptism. It was the event of the Holy Spirit coming down on the Gentiles, which led him to the conclusion that there is no reason to refuse baptism to those, whom God baptised with the Holy Spirit.

In our opinion, the speech has two functions, where the first one is of an internal nature (contents of the speech itself) and the second one is of an external nature (the relation the speech to the two other speeches in the section). These two functions seem to be completely different in regard to their issues, however they do not contradict each other. The internal function of the speech refers to presentation of the kerygma (Ac 10,37–40), which was proclaimed by the Twelve in Samaria and Judea to Gentiles living among the Jews, as well as to presentation of the leading role of the Twelve in the process of proclaiming the true gospel (Ac 10,41–42).¹⁷⁸ However, these two elements do not stand alone by themselves, but take on a preparatory character for exploring the external function of the speech, which *de facto* is indicated directly in narrative section (Ac 10,44–46), serving as the proof (lacking in the speech) for part of the speech called *proposito* (v. 43).

The speech has its external function in the narrative section concerning the mission in Judea and Samaria. This is the second of three speeches referring to problems that arose during this stage of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus to those, who were never a part of the house of Israel. After the Samaritans had accepted the Gospel, now also some Gentiles living in Palestine began to believe in Jesus. In both cases, God attests their faith by the act of the Holy Spirit

¹⁷⁷ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 194–195.

¹⁷⁸ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 463–464.

coming down on them.¹⁷⁹ The first speech (Ac 8,20–23) contains the message that God alone freely gives the gift of the Holy Spirit and it cannot be bought or forced by the will of man (negative aspect). In the second speech, God gave the gift to those who were not yet baptised, and this was recognised by Peter as God's acceptance of Gentiles among Jesus' disciples (positive aspect). Not only Jews, not only the lost from the nation (namely the Samaritans), but also Gentiles can share the same gift. This speech by Peter on one the hand progressively develops the idea that the gift of the Holy Spirit is the free act of God, which alone can confirm true faith in Jesus, and on the other hand prepares the ground for the third speech in the section.¹⁸⁰

C *The Speech of Peter to the Hebrews (Ac 11, 5–17)*

In the account of the mission in Judea and Samaria the speech to the Hebrews is the last among the three speeches referring to this stage of Luke's narration. For this reason, as was the case with the two previous groups of topical speeches, the speech takes on a concluding character by summing up the main message the author wants to communicate to the reader. Considering the fact that the preceding context concerns the event at Cornelius' house, which was the direct reason for the accusation made against Peter (Ac 11,3), rather than Peter's speech itself (Ac 11,5–17), the message must focus on the reason for welcoming Gentiles by the Hebrews (Jewish Christian).¹⁸¹ This is suggested by the effect of the speech when Peter's opponents finally agree with him (Ac 11,18). As proof of this an analysis of the structure, meaning and function of the speech will be helpful.

The text of Ac 11, 5–17

⁵ He said: I was in the town of Jaffa and was praying; while in a trance, I saw a vision. There was an object coming down like a great sheet lowered by four corners from the sky; and it came right down to me. ⁶ Looking intently at it, I began to distinguish quadrupeds, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds; ⁷ and I also heard a voice saying to me: stand up, Peter, kill and eat. ⁸ I answered: *no, Lord, for nothing defiled or unclean has ever passed my lips.* ⁹ Then a second time there came a voice spoke from the heavens: what God has pronounced clean, you must not call defiled. ¹⁰ This happened three times, and then all was drawn up again into the heavens.

179 In case of the Samaritans the baptism took place before the Holy Spirit came down on them (Ac 8,12–17).

180 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 195.

181 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 471.

¹¹ At that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesarea. ¹² The Spirit told me to go with them without hesitation. These six companions also went with me. And, when we came into the man's house, ¹³ he told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and how the angel had said to him: send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter, ¹⁴ and he will speak words to you, by which you will be saved, you and all your household. ¹⁵ I had but just begun to speak, when the Holy Spirit fell on them, exactly as on us at the beginning. ¹⁶ I recalled the words of the Lord: John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. ¹⁷ Since, God had given them the very same gift as he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?

C.1 *The Structural Analysis of the Speech*

The direct reason for the speech is criticism of Peter's association with Gentiles, which came from side of the Hebrews (Aramaic-speaking believers in Jesus) who, like the other apostles, heard about the event in Caesarea. The accusation concerned not only the fact that Peter went to the house of Gentiles, but also that he ate with them, which shows that the main problem was that of eating unclean food.¹⁸² The speech, then, is defensive.¹⁸³ There is no *exordium*, and the speech begins directly with an extensive *narratio* (vv. 5–16), which can be divided into two parts. The first part (vv. 5–11) concerns Peter's vision and it is followed by the first *probatio* (v. 12), which shows that the Spirit as the agent of Peter's decision. Then follows the second part of the *narratio* (vv. 13–15a) concerning the meeting at Cornelius' house, and this is followed by a second *probatio* (vv. 15b–16), which related the Holy Spirit coming down on the Gentiles. The speech ends with a *peroratio* (v. 17), which takes the form of a rhetorical question similar to the end of Peter's speech at Cornelius' house (Ac 10,47).

The context preceding the speech is Peter's speech at the house of Cornelius and the event of the Holy Spirit coming down on the Gentiles (Ac 10,34–48). The speech and its preceding context fit easily into Luke's narrative. The speech forms a conclusion to the event in Caesarea. The context following the speech refers to the beginning of the mission in Syrian Antioch (Ac 11,19–30). Although the speech and the following context, which have different topics, places and

¹⁸² This accusation is based on information found in Ac 10,48. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 471.

¹⁸³ Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 362. For different structure see E. Haulotte, "Fondation d'une communauté de type universel: Actes 10,1–11,18: Etude critique sur la rédaction, la 'structure' et la 'tradition' du récit," *RScRel* 58 (1970): 63–100.

subjects, are not directly related, the conclusion of the speech forms the basis for the action described in the account concerning the mission in Antioch. The recognition that God called also Gentiles was the reason for the Jerusalem Church to send Barnabas to Antioch (Ac 11,22).

Basically, the speech contains the information, which Luke had already included in his narrative, with the exception of two verses (v. 14 and v. 16). The speech at Ac 10,5–10 corresponds to Ac 10,9–16 referring to the vision of Peter. The account in the speech at Ac 10,11–17 corresponds to Ac 10,17–48, which refers to the meeting at Cornelius house.¹⁸⁴ In this part of the speech there are two new elements, which were not included in Luke's preceding narration. The first is the statement that the visit of Peter will bring salvation to the household of Cornelius (Ac 10,14). The second is Peter's recollection of the words of Jesus concerning baptism in the Holy Spirit (Ac 11,16).¹⁸⁵

C.2 *The Meaning of the Speech*

Peter's visit to the house of Cornelius raised some objections from the side of the Hebrews (Ac 11,2–3) who criticised him for eating with Gentiles. This forced Peter to defend himself in an apologetic speech (Ac 11,4).¹⁸⁶ Peter begins the apology with an account of the vision, during which God three times repeated the conversation with Peter until the addressee become capable of understanding and accepting its meaning (Ac 11,10).¹⁸⁷ The most important message of the vision concerns fact that it was man and not God who divided things into those that are clean and unclean (Ac 11,9).¹⁸⁸ The Law (Lev 11,44), which prevented the nation from eating some animals, became the reason for separation between them and others who did not obey the prohibition.¹⁸⁹ The simple syllogism—those who do eat unclean food are unclean and those who

184 Concerning the function of redundancy in Ac 10,1–11,18, see R.D. Witherup, "Cornelius Over and Over and Over Again: 'Functional Redundancy' in the Acts of the Apostles," *JSNr* 49 (1993): 45–66.

185 Lukan Peter recalled the Jesus' words from His speech in Ac 1,5. Conzelman, *Acts of the Apostles*, 86.

186 It is important to notice that the accusation refers to social relationship with Gentiles and not directly to the baptism of Gentiles. It indicates that Jewish Christians in Jerusalem respect the basic regulation of Judaism.

187 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 343–344. Most probably the triple occurrence of the vision (Ac 11,10) confirms the importance of God's statement. The mention of the time of prayer (Ac 10,9, 11,5) as the time of vision occurrences, indicates the proper context of divine intervention.

188 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 455.

189 Concerning animals prohibited to eat, see Lev 11,1–47.

do not eat unclean food are clean—throughout the centuries has built an incredibly strong wall, which however had been challenged by Jesus (Mk 7,19), and now is challenged by the Lukan Peter (Ac 10,15, 11,9) by claiming God's judgment on this matter.¹⁹⁰ This means that the Law concerning cleanness of man based on the cleanness of the food comes from man, who *de facto* has no right to decide this.¹⁹¹ God ordered Peter to recognise all things as being clean, because God sees it in this way, what means that Peter can eat unclean animals without risk of becoming unclean, and that means those (Gentiles) who eat unclean animals are not unclean. Peter does not immediately agree with God, and his opposition forces God to revile Peter three times. It is to be noted that this part of speech does not in fact contain the information that Peter (already) agreed with God on this matter. The part of the speech concerning clean and unclean food refers to the second part of the Hebrews' accusation (Ac 11,3b) in regard to Peter's eating with Gentiles, which implies that he ate unclean food.

After responding to the second part of the accusation Peter turns to respond to the first part of the accusation concerning his visiting the Gentiles. Peter connects the vision and the visitation of Cornelius' messengers and these are presented as successive related events (v. 11).¹⁹² In addition to Peter's being opposed to eating unclean food, he also was not eager to meet the messengers, what is suggested by the words of the Spirit (Ac 10,20) and Peter's mention of the Holy Spirit as the agent giving him an order (Ac 11,12). At that time Peter was incapable to make sense either of the vision (Ac 10,19) or of the purpose of the Spirit's order. However, Peter and his six companions obeyed the order and went to the Gentile's house.¹⁹³ In this way Peter answered the second part of the accusation by pointing to the divine inspiration for his decision.

After his apology concerning accusation (Ac 11,3) Peter proceeds to present God's purpose for his and Cornelius' visions, which led to their encounter. It was at the command of God's angel that Cornelius sent for Peter, and it was at the command of the Holy Spirit that Peter answered Cornelius' invitation. This makes both of them to be merely servants performing God's will. Peter, after hearing the story from the other side (Ac 11,13–14), which contains a new element referring to salvation of Cornelius' household through the words of Peter, mentions the speech (Ac 10,28–29.34–43.47) that was interrupted by the Holy

190 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1772–1774.

191 Use of μή with present imperative κοίνου indicates that that discrimination of people based on food customs is not the will of God. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 184.

192 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1824.

193 The account in Ac 10,9–23 does not include numbers of the brothers.

Spirit coming down on the Gentiles (Ac 11,15).¹⁹⁴ This surprising event seems to be immediately recognised by Peter as identical to the event they experienced at the beginning, and it led him to recall Jesus' words (Ac 1,5) concerning baptism with the Holy Spirit (Ac 11,16). The logic is plain: the apostles were baptised with the Holy Spirit because they believed in Jesus, and because the Gentiles were baptised with the Holy Spirit, they must believe in Jesus, finally leading Peter to understanding that God does not distinguish between the apostles and the Gentiles, who believe in Jesus (Ac 11,17a).¹⁹⁵ If they have the same faith as the apostles, Peter is not in a position to refuse accepting them into a predominantly Jewish Christian community, because it is the purpose of God's plan, which began with the visions.¹⁹⁶ Refusal to baptise the Gentiles who have the same faith as the apostles—as is confirmed by the Holy Spirit—, merely because they eat unclean food, would be nothing less than opposition to God.

According to Luke's narrative, Peter presents the whole event as a realisation of God's plan. Acceptance of the Gentiles is not an act of breaking God's Law (Ac 11,8), but it is an act of fulfilling God's plan. This, however, requires abandoning that part of the Law that comes from man (Ac 11,9). Obedience to God led Peter to this (for him) confusing truth, which all Hebrews must face (Ac 11,18).

C.3 *The Function of the Speech*

The speech is the final one in the section concerning the mission of Peter in Judea and Samaria (Ac 8,20–23, 10,28–29.34–43.47, 11,5–17), which in the

194 The mention of the salvation of the house of Cornelius probably correlates to the problem discussed during the so-called Jerusalem council (Ac 15,1.11). Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 198. The topic of the salvation of Cornelius' household is not explicitly mentioned in Ac 10,34–43, but it may be included in Cornelius' prayers (Ac 10,4–6). The Lukan Peter skilfully moves his speech from successful defence against an accusation of breaking Jewish customs into an exposition of the God's purpose (namely the salvation of one Gentiles' family), which lay behind Peter's challenging of the socio-religious boundaries.

195 This interpretation is based on our understanding of v. 17, where πιστεύουσιν refers to ἡμῖν, although it is possible to refer it to αὐτοῖς. The second part of the speech (Ac 11,11–17) refers to the event at Cornelius house, which led Peter to baptise the Gentiles (Ac 10,48). When Peter was giving the kerygma, God granted the Gentiles with the Holy Spirit, what confirmed their faith in Jesus. There the faith of the Gentiles is in focus. In Ac 11,5–17 focus is on the Holy Spirit, who is given to the Gentiles in the same manner as to the apostles, what means that the base for the event in both cases is the same, and it is faith in Jesus. The meaning of the v. 17 is that the Gentiles have the same faith as the apostles.

196 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1826.

narrative structure of Acts is designed to explain the reason and the way in which Gentiles joined the group of Jesus' disciples. The reason is the faith of the Gentiles in Jesus, which is known to God but is not yet known to the Hebrews. This is true in the case of the Samaritans (Ac 8,12–13) and the Gentiles (Ac 11,17). The way in which the Hebrews recognised the faith of the Gentiles is the coming down of the Holy Spirit on them (Ac 10,44–46) in the same manner as the disciples experienced it previously (Ac 2,1–4). It is all part of God's plan, aimed at making the Hebrews recognise that faith in Jesus the Saviour is not limited to nations or borders.¹⁹⁷ Those who believe will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is the sign confirming their true faith. The Hebrews cannot oppose this confirmation. The agent of God, who will convince the Hebrews about God's will concerning the Gentiles, is Peter—the head of the Twelve.¹⁹⁸

The speech also has an external function within the three speeches concerning the mission in Judea and Samaria. In this set, the speech to the Hebrews serves as an indicator that in spite of the Hebrews' prejudices and objections concerning the Jews' association with Samaritans and Gentiles, they are forced by God's signs (the gift of the Holy Spirit for the Gentiles and Samaritans) to accept the truth that there is place for everyone who has faith among the believers of Jesus. It is Peter who presents the matter and its explanation to the Hebrews in the form of recognition of God's plan, based on his experience during the mission activities in Samaria and Judea. In fact, this is the speech, which created a sufficient opening for Gentiles believing in Jesus, and living among Jews, but it did not definitively remove all reasons for further controversy concerning the salvation of Gentiles.¹⁹⁹

3 To the End of the Earth

The greatest part of Acts concerns the mission to the end of the earth (Ac 13,1–28,31). This section contains three groups of topical speeches. The first group concerns Paul's mission journeys (Ac 13–14, 15,36–18,22, 19,1–20,38) and it con-

197 See Johnson, *Decision Making in the Church: A Bible Model* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 74–77.

198 The mission to Gentiles is not exclusively Paul's prerogative, since the account concerning the mission in Samaria shows that long before Paul at least some members of the Twelve successfully proclaimed the gospel to Gentiles.

199 The problem concerning the circumcision of the Gentiles (Ac 15) will again raise the issue of Gentiles' salvation but this time it will refer to Gentiles living outside Palestine.

tains three topical speeches (Ac 13,16–41.46–47, 17,22–31, 20,18–35).²⁰⁰ The second group relates to the Jerusalem council (Ac 15,1–35), which despite the brevity of the narrative contains three topical speeches (Ac 15,7–11.13–21.23–29).²⁰¹ The third group concerns Paul's period of imprisonment (Ac 21,26–28.31) and contains a number of speeches, which we arrange into five sections according to a socio-geographic key. The first section (3.3.1) refers to Paul's imprisonment in Jerusalem (Ac 21,26–23.30) and it contains three topical speeches (Ac 22,1–21, 23,1.6.26–30).²⁰² The second section (3.3.2) concerns Paul's trial in Caesarea before Felix (Ac 23,31–24.27) and it contains the three topical speeches (Ac 24,2–8.10–21.22). The third section (3.3.3) concerns Paul's trial in Caesarea before Festus (Ac 25,1–26.32) and it contains the three topical speeches (Ac 25,8.10–11.14–21, 26,2–29).²⁰³ The fourth section (3.3.4) concerns Paul's voyage to Rome (Ac 27,1–28.14) and it contains Paul's three shorter speeches (Ac 27,10.21–26.33–34). The fifth section (3.3.5) concerns Paul's stay at Rome (Ac 28,15–31) and it contains three topical speeches (Ac 28,17–20.21–22.25–28).

3.1 *Paul's Mission Journey*

A The Speech of Paul at Pisidian Antioch (Ac 13, 16–41.46–47)
The speech is the first of three thematic speeches in the accounts concerning the mission journey of Paul (Ac 13,4–14.28, 15,36–18.22, 19,1–20.38).²⁰⁴ The speech was given during the first mission journey of Barnabas and Saul/Paul in Pisidian Antioch and it was addressed to Jews living in the Diaspora.²⁰⁵ This allows us to expect that the speech focuses on the kerygma about Jesus as the Messiah, while taking into consideration two factors, the Jewish background of the hearers and Hellenistic world they live in.²⁰⁶ The following analysis will give details concerning the structure, meaning and function of the speech.

200 In the narration concerning the mission journey there are four structural speeches: the speech in Lystra (Ac 14,15–17), the speech of Gallio (Ac 18,14–15), the speech of Demetrius (Ac 19,25–27) and the speech of the town clerk (Ac 19,35–40).

201 This section contains no structural speeches.

202 The section contains one structural speech by the Elders to Paul (Ac 21,20–25).

203 The section contains one structural speech by Festus (Ac 25,24–27).

204 It is to be noted that each journey contains only one thematic speech. The accounts concerning the second and third mission journey do not contain any other speeches, however the account concerning the first mission journey contains the preparatory speech (Ac 14,15–17)

205 Bowker thinks that the speech is in the proem homily form. J.W. Bowker, "Speeches in Acts: A Study in Proem and Yelammedenu Form," *NTS* 14 (1967–1968): 104–105.

206 For the socio-historical account background of Pisidian Antioch, see Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 2026–2044.

The text of Ac 13, 16–41. 46–47

¹⁶ Men of Israel and others, who fear God, listen. ¹⁷ The God of this people Israel chose our ancestors, and during their stay in Egypt made the people great, and then with uplifted arm brought them out from that land. ¹⁸ For about forty years he bore with them in the desert; ¹⁹ then, after destroying seven nations in Canaan, he allotted their land to this them, ²⁰ for about four hundred and fifty years. [In later times] he gave them Judges, until the prophet Samuel. ²¹ And, when they asked for a king, God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, who reigned for forty years. ²² After removing him, he raised David to the king, and bore this testimony to him: *In David, the son of Jesse, I have found a man after my own heart, who will carry out all my will.* ²³ It was from this man's descendants that God, in accordance with his promise, gave Israel a Saviour, Jesus; ²⁴ before the appearance of his, John having first proclaimed a baptism on repentance for all the people of Israel. ²⁵ And as John was finishing his work, he said: *What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. But there is one coming after me, whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.* ²⁶ Brothers, you descendants of Abraham's family, and all those who fears God, it was to us that the word of this salvation was sent. ²⁷ The people of Jerusalem and their leaders, failing to recognise Jesus, and not understanding the utterances of the prophets that are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. ²⁸ They found no reason at all for putting him to death, and yet asked his execution from Pilate; ²⁹ and, after carrying out everything written about him, they took Jesus down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb. ³⁰ But God raised him from the dead; ³¹ and he appeared for many days to those who had gone up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, and who are now witnesses for him to the people. ³² And we bring you the good news that what God promised to our ancestors. ³³ That our children have had this promise fulfilled to them by God, by his raising Jesus. That is just what is written in the second Psalm: *You are my Son; this day I have begotten you.* ³⁴ As to his [God] raising him [Jesus] from the dead, never again to return to corruption, this is what is said: *I will give you the holy promises made to David.* ³⁵ And, therefore, in another Psalm it is said: *You will not let your Holy One experience corruption.* ³⁶ David, after obediently doing God's will in his own time, fell asleep and was laid by the side of his ancestors and has seen corruption, ³⁷ but he, whom God raised from the dead, did not undergo corruption. ³⁸ Let it be known to you therefore, brethren that through him forgiveness of sins is being proclaimed to you, ³⁹ and by him, everyone who believes in him is absolved from every sin from which under the Law of Moses you could

not be absolved.⁴⁰ Beware, therefore, that what is said in the prophets does not come true of you: ⁴¹*for I do a deed in your days, a deed you will never believe, if one declares it to you.*

⁴⁶ It was necessary that the word of God should be told to you first; but, since you reject it and reckon yourselves not worthy of the eternal life; we turn to the Gentiles! ⁴⁷ For this is the Lord's command to us: *I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles, so that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.*

A.1 *The Structural Analysis of the Speech*

Paul gave the speech in Pisidian Antioch during the second part (Ac 13,13–52) of the first mission journey.²⁰⁷ The speech is given in the Synagogue during the Sabbath prayers (Ac 13,14), when after reading the Law and Prophets, the rulers of the Synagogue asked Paul for words of encouragement (v. 15).²⁰⁸ Considering the place, time and reason for the speech, it should be classed as deliberative rhetoric, where the aim is the *metanoia* of the listeners.

The speech is preceded by the first part of the account referring to the first mission journey, which concerns mission activities on Cyprus and the probable conversion of Sergius Paulus, the governor of the island (Ac 13,4–12).²⁰⁹ The account of the mission in Antioch follows the account of mission of Barnabas and Paul in Iconium and Lystra (Ac 14,1–20) and ends with an account of the voyage back to Syrian Antioch (Ac 13,21–28).

The speech begins with an *exordium* (v. 16) in which Paul addresses Israelites and others who fear God. It is followed by an extended *narratio* (vv. 17–25). This section, which has a historical character, contains two parts. The first part contains a short and very schematic account of Jewish history from the time

207 Rothschild thinks that the stereotypical character of the account is the result of Luke's limited knowledge of the details of the mission journey. C.K. Rothschild, "Pisidian Antioch in Acts 13: The Denuement of the South Galatian Hypothesis," *NovT* 54 (2012): 340.

208 Luke uses term ἀρχισυνάγωγοι in plural (also in Mk 5,23) although usually it is used in the singular (Lk 8,41.49, 13,14, Ac 18,8.17). Scholars have offered various explanations for the use of the plural here. For example, Johnson sees here reference to collegial leadership (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 230), while Keener thinks that the term is used in an honorary way in order to include the socio-economic status of the patrons of the Synagogue (*Acts*, vol. 2, 2045–2047). The second opinion seems to be more accurate since in his address Paul includes those who fear God (Ac 13,16).

209 Paul's encounter with Sergius Paulus most probably influenced the decision to extend the mission to the region of Pisidian Antioch, since the family of the Cyprus governor dwelt in this region. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 403.

of Moses until the time of David (Ac 13,17–22). The second part (Ac 13,23–25) refers to Jesus as a descendent of David and to the relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist. The *propositio* of the speech is presented in v. 26, and it concerns Paul as being the messenger of salvation in Jesus. There follows a *probatio* (vv. 27–37), which consists of two parts. The first part is an account of the historical events concerning Jesus (Ac 13,27–31) and the second part is a kerygma referring to Jesus as the fulfilment of God's promises (Ac 13,33–41). The speech ends with a *peroratio* (vv. 38–41), in which the audience is urged to accept the Paul's message. Verses 46–47 are concluding remarks.²¹⁰ In v. 46 reference is made to the change in the course of proclamation from the Jews to the Gentiles. The quotation from Is 49,6 in v. 47 serves as the argument for the statement presented in v. 46.

A.2 *The Meaning of the Speech*

The context of the speech is positive: the rulers of Synagogue asked Paul and Barnabas, as new visitors to the community, to give a speech (v. 15). Paul's speech begins a casual address (v. 16b) to the Israelites (Jews living in Diaspora) and to the God-fearers (Gentiles who have been attracted by the Jewish religion but were not yet proselytes).²¹¹ In the beginning of the speech (the first part of the *narratio*), Paul gives a short account of God's powerful works in the history of the chosen nation (vv. 17–22). It begins with the saving works in the land of Egypt (v. 17), followed by an account of God's patience during the time in the desert (v. 18) and His granting of the land of Canaan to the Israelites (v. 19).²¹² In the Promised Land, which He gave to them, first the Judges (v. 20), then the prophet Samuel and lastly King Saul, after whom the David' Dynasty was established (vv. 21–22).²¹³ This very schematic account does not concen-

210 Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*, 81.

211 In v. 16 and v. 26, the God-fearers are not a part of Israel. However, in v. 43 Paul speaks about Gentile proselytes who converted to Judaism. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 230.

212 The text of Ac 13,16–47 contains many textual problems, resulting in different interpretations. Concerning the problems, see Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 357–367. Lukan Paul in his brief history of Israel until entering the Promised Land, concentrates particularly on the positive aspects of the more complex history of Israelites, in order to expose the greatness of God's deeds (Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 510–511). Probably for this reason the name and role of Moses are not mentioned (Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 409), which makes the presentation of Jewish History in this speech different in many details and in general from the approach presented in Stephen's speech (Ac 7,2–60).

213 Luke's temporal marker concerning Saul's reign agrees with Josephus *Ant.* 6.378 (40 years), but disagrees with 1 Sam 13,1 (2 years) and Josephus *Ant.* 10.143 (20 years). Concerning the

trate in this particular period of history on any eminent persons, but mention is made of some events that were of importance for the nation prior to the David's Dynasty. In fact, the aim of the account is to present David as the chosen servant of God who will fulfil God's will, and to whom a special promise was given.²¹⁴ The account (Ac 13,17–22), stressing God's power and grace, underlines the idea that everything in the history of the nation is an act of God.

Moving to the next part of the *narratio* (vv. 23–25) Paul omitted almost one thousand years of Jewish history, going directly to the account concerning Jesus, who is presented as the fulfilment of the promise given to David (v. 23).²¹⁵ Although the speaker does not mention what kind of promise is fulfilled, it is clear to the addressees (at least to the Jews) that it refers to the Saviour from the house of David.²¹⁶ In order to stress that Jesus is the Saviour, not John the Baptist, Paul added an apologetic explanation in which John is presented as the man who has prepared the way for the Saviour (vv. 24–25).²¹⁷

The next step in the narrative is the *propositio* of the speech (v. 26), which shows Paul and Barnabas to be the witnesses, chosen to proclaim Jesus, the Saviour (v. 26).²¹⁸ The new section in Paul's speech is indicated by the new address "brothers" referring to Jews and God-fearers, different from address in Ac 13,16 in order to emphasise that speaker and hearers share the same religious

election of David, the Lukan Paul uses the term ἐγείρω—to raise up, which is also used in verse 30 with reference to Jesus' resurrection, what indicates a deliberative typology: David–Jesus. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 232. It is attested by verse 23, which explicitly presents Jesus as the descendant of David.

214 The verse concerning David as the chosen one (v. 22) is in fact a compilation of three texts: Ps 89,21 (LXX Ps 88,21), 1 Sam 13,14, Is 44,28).

215 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 513.

216 The main text referring to the descendant of David, who became the Saviour of Israel is 2 Sam 7,12.16, but other texts speak of a "future David" (Jer 30,9, Hos 3,5, Ezek 37,24–25). Concerning the textual problem of verse 23, we follow Metzger, who considers the reading "God has brought to Israel salvation" as the error, and he accepts the reading "God has brought to Israel a Saviour, Jesus". Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 359.

217 It is possible that some Jews in Antioch thought that John was the Messiah (consider Ac 18,23–19, 7). The main aim of including the account concerning John the Baptist is to indicate that the preparation of the Messianic age was ended. The one who actually accomplished this was John, who fulfilled his work by pointing to Jesus as the Messiah. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 104. The quotation of John's words comes from Lk 3,16 and Jn 1,20.27. John's mission (repentance) is also attested by Josephus (*Ant.* 18.116–119).

218 This is proclaiming to Jews and Gentiles who fear God, which indirectly points to the universality of their message.

expectation.²¹⁹ Paul claims that he and his co-worker are legitimate messengers proclaiming the true teaching about Jesus, the Saviour. The truth of the statement presented in v. 26 is extensively proven in the *probatio* (v. 27–37).²²⁰

The proof that Paul and Barnabas are the witnesses takes the form of a negative argument, by pointing at those who, while supposed to become the Jesus' witnesses, have not recognised Jesus as the Saviour (v. 27).²²¹ Among them are inhabitants of Jerusalem and the rulers,²²² who by their ignorance somehow fulfilled the negative prophecy concerning the rejection of God's servant.²²³ In order to emphasise innocence of Jesus, Paul underlines that they without reason condemned him to the death and they required from Pilate that he act according to their decision (v. 28).²²⁴ When Jesus died on the cross they buried him, and in this way the prophecy concerning the fate of God's servant was fulfilled (v. 29).²²⁵ The people of Jerusalem and their rulers are presented as agents fulfilling the prophecy, which, however, does not free them from responsibility (v. 29). In this way the Lukan Paul discredited the people of Jerusalem and their rulers as the sufficient messengers to proclaim God's salvation for Israel.²²⁶ At verse 30 Lukan Paul changes an agent. The agents of Jesus' destruction were

219 J. Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1967), 123.

220 Bauckham considers vv. 26–31 to be one of the major kerygma summaries ("Kerygmatic Summary in the Speeches of Acts," 213).

221 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 105.

222 In his Gospel (Lk 22,64–23,25), Luke in the account concerning the Sanhedrin, Pilate and Herod used the term "rulers" to include both religious and political rulers.

223 A particular text is not cited, but similar texts such as Is 52,13–53,12 are probably in mind here. This seems to be supported by following sentences. Mention of the fact that it is read during every prayer meeting of the Jews, suggests that it should be also known to the Paul's hearers. Keener sees in verse 27 an irony, which runs throughout the *Corpus Lukanum*, that those who rejected Jesus somehow fulfilled the Scripture. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 2067.

224 This presentation of those who rejected Jesus, serves to prove that their decision is based on ignorance, which led them to ill-willing and unjust action. Concerning recognition of Jesus' innocence by Pilate, see Lk 23,4,14–15,22–23,25, Ac 3,14.

225 The use of term *tree* or *wood* instead of *cross* in Paul's speech serves to avoid the bad image of cross as the tool of torture. C.A.J. Pillai, *Apostolic Interpretation of History: A Commentary on Acts 13:16–41* (Hicksville: Exposition, 1980), 40. Exposition of Jesus' burial underlines reality of His death, which is important in context of statement that will be presented in the next verse. The subject of Jesus' condemnation and Jesus' burial is not the same. Conzelman, *Acts of the Apostles*, 105.

226 This interpretation is attested by verse 32, which together with verse 26 creates the frame exposing the kerygma proclaimed by Paul and Barnabas.

the Jews in Jerusalem, but the agent of Jesus' resurrection was God.²²⁷ The act of God, who raised Jesus from death, is the part of His divine plan of salvation.²²⁸ This is another claim of Paul that needs to be proofed. This statement in Paul's speech serves as proof that the people in Jerusalem were in the wrong. The risen Jesus appeared to the disciples, and they were thus able to give witness to the world that Jesus is alive (v. 32).²²⁹ Indications of Jesus' activities after His resurrection emphasise the reality of His resurrection and point to those (the Twelve) who were eyes-witnesses to the events, and who now take responsibility for proclaiming the kerygma. Although the speech does not contain a link connecting the mandate of the Twelve and the mandate of Paul and Barnabas, based on the argumentation presented in vv. 27–29, it is understandable to the hearers that not the people of Jerusalem and their rulers, but Paul and Barnabas are proclaiming to the Jews in Pisidian Antioch the good news (v. 32) concerning salvation of Israel, which was promised to their ancestors and is now brought to fulfilment (v. 33).²³⁰ The proclaimed good news concerns the realisation of God's promise (v. 26), which is related to the person of Jesus (v. 23), and more precisely to the event of His resurrection by God (v. 33b), which here serves as the proof for the statement contained in vv. 32–33a. Further argumentation is based on the three quotations from the Scripture (Ps 2,7, Is 55,3, 16,10 [LXX 16,7]) and concerning resurrection of the chosen one.²³¹ The Lukan Paul shows his extraordinary rhetorical skills, when on the one hand his use of the citations made the hearers refer them to the king David, and on the other hand gave his interpretation (vv. 36–37) that made the hearers recognise that the citations cannot refer to David, but they refer to the descendant (Jesus) of the king David.²³² Messianic interpretation of the Scripture, which used King David as *type* to whom God gave the promise that was not realised during his lifetime, points on Jesus as *antitype*, whose resurrection is the fulfilment of God's promise given to David.

227 R.F. O'Toole, "Christ's Resurrection in Acts 13,13–52," *Bib* 60 (1979): 361–372.

228 This short but precise kerygma statement concerning three important elements (God as the agent, real death, real resurrection) is proofed by evidence (v. 31) and the Scripture's interpretation (vv. 33b–41). Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 515.

229 Use of the third person plural pronoun excludes Paul and Barnabas from the disciples who saw the risen Jesus.

230 The use of the first person plural shows that Paul and Barnabas include themselves and Jews in Antioch among the descendants of the ancestors.

231 All quotations in this section come from LXX, and in some cases the text differs from the Hebrew manuscripts.

232 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 234–235.

The last part (*peroratio*) of the speech begins again with a direct address to the hearers, who are called “brethren” (v. 38), and they are addressees of the most important message proclaimed by Paul. Jesus, who is a descendant of King David, who was rejected by the Jerusalem authorities, who died on the cross, and who was resurrected by God, who in this way fulfilled his promise, is the one by whom man can be justified.²³³ The consequence of justification by faith in Jesus is forgiveness of sins, which was not possible to man justified by the Law. The most important statement of Paul is that what was impossible to the Jews, who sought justification by the Law, now has been granted by Jesus (v. 38) to everyone who believes in Him (v. 39).²³⁴ The following threat (vv. 40–41), which contains a quotation from the LXX version of the Book of Habakkuk (Ha 1,5), is intended to prevent the hearers from neglecting Paul’s message, lest they meet the same consequences that befell the people in the time of Habakkuk (Ha 5–11).²³⁵

The warning does not prevent the Jews from opposing Paul, not on account of his teaching but out of jealousy on the part of some Jews who could not accept the fact that the whole town wanted to hear Paul (Ac 13,45).²³⁶ Luke indicates some very interesting information, where the first refers to the fact that some Jews accepted Paul’s teaching (vv. 42–43) but others rejected it, partly based on envy towards Paul’s success among non-Jews. The second concerns Paul’s conviction that the kerygma should be taught first to the Jews. The third indicates a causal connection between rejection of the God’s words (Paul’s

233 The theme of justification of all by the faith in Jesus is characteristic of Paul (Rom 3,22, 10,4,11) and it concerns Jesus as the expiation offering for the sins of humankind (Rom 3,24–25). Luke usually refers to the faith in context of the miracles (Lk 5,20, 7,9, 8,25, 17,6, 18,42) but here he presents typical of Paul’s kerygma connecting the faith with the forgiveness of sins, what shows that at least Luke known the Paul’s teaching on this subject. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 2074–2075.

234 The phrase *πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων*—*everyone who believes* here refers to both Jews and Gentiles as Ac 2,44, 10,43 confirmed it. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 236; J.J. Kilgallen, “Acts 13,38–39: Culmination of Paul’s Speech in Pisidia,” *Bib* 69 (1988): 480–506.

235 T. Novick, “Eschatological Ignorance and the Haftarah on Acts 3,27,” *NovT* 54 (2012): 174. Similar kind of worrying, characteristic of the prophets’ language, is find especially in the twelve Minor Prophets, who connecting possible spurn of their words with severe consequences. In this way, Lukan Paul worries the Antioch audiences from overlook the Messiah. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 519. This warring connects the main part of the speech (Ac 13,16–41) with addition (Ac 13,46–47), which shows that part of the Jewish community rejected Paul’s words, what caused his decision to turn the mission to Gentiles.

236 In fact there is no direct relationship between the content of the speech (Ac 13,16–41) and the concluding remarks (Ac 13,46–47).

kerygma about Jesus) and self-condemnation, which reveals Luke's conviction about salvation only in the name of Jesus (Ac 4,12). The fourth shows that the rejection forced Paul to leave the Jews who spurned his message, and turn to Gentiles (Ac 13,46). The fifth indicates that this turn is seen by the Lukan Paul as God's command, which is proven by the words of the prophet (Ac 13,47).²³⁷

A.3 *The Function of the Speech*

The speech is the first in a series of three thematic speeches (Ac 13,16–41, 17,16–31, 20,18–35) concerning the three mission journeys of Paul.²³⁸ This is the speech that Paul gave during the first mission journey and it is addressed to the Jews living in the Diaspora.²³⁹ It exemplifies the key contents and rhetoric of speeches given by the Lukan Paul. Paul presents Jesus as the fulfilment of God's promise given to David that from his house will come the One who will fulfil the will of God. Paul strongly argues that neither king David nor John the Baptist were the complete or final fulfilment of God's promise, which in context that was the life of diaspora Jews seems reasonable. The fulfilment of God's promise is Jesus the Messiah, who was rejected by inhabitants of Jerusalem but was approved by God, who raised Him from death making Him the only One by whom man can be justified. This kerygma did not meet direct opposition from the side of the Jews, however those among the Jews who did not believe in Paul's kerygma created a tide of opposition, which forced Paul to abandon a mission to Jews and turn to work among Gentiles.²⁴⁰

The primary function of the speech is to present the kerygma and to show the way in which Paul proclaimed it to the Diaspora Jews in Pisidian Antioch. The presentation exposes the main problem in Paul's kerygma, which some Jews from Antioch opposed, namely the claim that Jesus is the Messiah

237 Verse 47 contains a quotation from Is 49,6 (LXX). The use of the conjunction ἐπειδὴ (since/because) indicates the causal relation between the rejection of Paul's message by the Jews and Paul's decision concerning the mission to Gentiles. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 241.

238 The speech in Lystra (Ac 14,15–17) does not belong to the thematic speeches, and it is classed as a preparatory speech.

239 During this mission Paul and Barnabas (after extending the mission to the regions of Pisidia and Pamphylia) proclaimed the kerygma also to Gentiles, however it was always a result of being rejected by Jews on the one hand, and on the other hand the fact that they were accepted by Gentiles. The statement in v. 46 is limited only to the case of Pisidian Antioch, and it should not be understood as relating to the general approach in Paul's mission's journeys, because during the second and third mission journey Paul always, whenever possible, started his mission by visiting a Synagogue.

240 The speech was not the direct reason for the Jews' opposition to Paul (Ac 13,45).

promised by God to David. Since there are no other speeches to the Diaspora Jews in the all accounts concerning Paul's mission journeys, this speech should be taken as a typical example of how Paul addressed Jews who were open to his message during his three mission journeys. It also indicates the most difficult part of his kerygma, i.e. that "Jesus is the Messiah" was not easily accepted not only by Jews in Pisidian Antioch but generally by Jews living outside Judea. The secondary function of the speech concerns its relationship to the whole of Luke's narrative concept of Acts. According to the outline of Acts presented in Ac 1,8, Luke since chapter 13 turns almost exclusively to an account of the mission the end of the world.²⁴¹ This part of the narrative starts with a mission to the diaspora Jews as its primary aim, but according to Luke's pattern "rejection-acceptance", the partial failure of this mission caused the turn to mission among Gentiles.²⁴² In this context, the end of the speech, especially the addition (Ac 13,46–47), shows the circumstances, which led to the first deliberative and systematic revision of Paul's mission principle that is first the mission to Jews.²⁴³ It is not coincidence that such a statement is made clearly by Paul, who in Luke's narrative is the apostle chosen by Christ for the mission to Gentiles. It is the very first time that Paul offers the statement that became the most accurate description of his mission activities: the kerygma was always first addressed to the Jews (pattern of rejection), but it achieved success usually among Gentiles (pattern of acceptance).

B The Speech of Paul at Areopagus (Ac 17, 22–31)

Paul's speech at Athens is the only thematic speech placed in Luke's account of the second mission journey. Although the length of Paul stay at Athens seems to be hardly long enough to justify the speech, in comparison with the mission at Corinth, and Paul's mission achievement in the city seems to have had little success, Luke chose Athens as the place where Paul gave the speech that is

²⁴¹ Ac 15 although it concerns a mission problem, the event itself takes place in Jerusalem.

²⁴² The account concerning the beginning of the Christian community in Syrian Antioch (Ac 11,19–30), although it contains precise information about proclaiming kerygma to Gentiles (Ac 11,20), it takes up the contradictory responses of the Jews and Gentiles as a common pattern in Ac 13–28.

²⁴³ The narration in Ac 10,1–11,18 concerning the case of Cornelius and his household refers to an exceptional event, which marks the beginning of a discussion about acceptance of Gentiles among Jewish-Christians, but it does not refer to the mission to Gentiles as seen in the suspicious attitude of Jerusalem community towards mission activities in Syrian Antioch (Ac 11,20–21).

significantly different from his other speeches.²⁴⁴ This speech is given to the audience who are inhabitants of the city known as the cradle of culture and philosophy.²⁴⁵ As a result the speech has a special importance both in its message and in the function it plays in Luke's narrative.²⁴⁶

The text of Ac 17, 22–31

²² Men of Athens, I notice that in every respect you are religiously. ²³ For as I was going about, looking at your sacred shrines, I came upon an altar with this inscription *To an Unknown God*. What, therefore, you worship in ignorance, that I am now proclaiming to you. ²⁴ The God who made the world and all things that are in it; he who is the Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by hands, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all life, and breath, and everything. ²⁶ And he made from one, every nation of men to live on the earth's surface, having determined the times and the limits of their habitation, ²⁷ That they might search for God, if by any means they might feel after him and find him. Though he is not really far from any one of us, ²⁸ for in him we live and move and are, as even some of your own poets have said: *For we are his offspring*. ²⁹ Therefore, as the offspring of God, we must not think that the deity has any resemblance to [anything made of] gold, or silver, or stone, a work of human art and imagination. ³⁰ The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands everyone everywhere to repent, ³¹ because he has fixed a day on which he intends to judge the world with justice, by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising this man from the dead.

B.1 *The Structural Analysis of the Speech*

The speech is placed between the account concerning brief mission activities in the cities of Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea) and the long

²⁴⁴ Downing underlines that Luke, like Josephus, composed specific speeches according to particular situations. F.G. Downing, "Ethical Pagan Theism and the Speeches in Acts," *NTS* 27 (1981): 558.

²⁴⁵ Gray thinks that the reason for inviting Paul to give the speech was the Athenians' curiosity. P. Gray, "Athenian Curiosity (Acts 17,21)," *NovT* 47 (2005): 113–116.

²⁴⁶ Marguerat points to the semantic ambivalence of the speech, which lays it open to two interpretations. As an example he uses v. 26, which contains terms that were understood differently by Greeks and Jews. D. Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian. Writing the 'Acts of the Apostles'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 68–75.

mission in Corinth. Until Paul came to Athens, despite some obstacles, he enjoyed success in the mission, creating new communities of believers, but he was not able to avoid conflict between his message and the local communities' way of living and thinking. In each case this led to persecution and the need to escape to a new location. In Philippi, Paul's exorcism became a reason for the accusation that his teaching offended Roman customs and rules (Ac 16,20–21).²⁴⁷ In Thessalonica, Paul was accused of proclaiming a king other than Caesar (Ac 17,7).²⁴⁸ In the case of Berea, Luke does not give the reason for the accusation but as it was in two previous cases he indicates that the opponents were also the Gentiles of the city (Ac 17,13).²⁴⁹ The three cases show that according to Luke's narrative, Paul's mission activities were generally found to be not acceptable in the societies based on Greek culture.²⁵⁰

In Corinth Paul finally found a place to pursue an extended mission, but this was disturbed not by Gentiles but by Jews of the city, who acted without the participation of non-Jews, and their accusation specifically concerned the Jewish Law (Ac 18,5–6.12–13).²⁵¹ Luke only mentions that Paul concentrated on the mission to Gentiles (Ac 18,6–7) and many Corinthians accepted his teaching (Ac 18,8).²⁵² This is not surprising when we take into consideration that Corinth at the time was not the old Greek city but rather a new Roman colony inhabited by people of many nations.

The only speech of Paul in the narrative concerning the second mission journey is placed in Athens (the most Greek of Greek cities), and more precisely at the place called Areopagus, the cradle of Greek politics, philosophy, and culture.²⁵³ There is no trace of any persecution of Paul either before or

247 G.S. Keener, *Acts. An Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 2374–2375, 2470–2472.

248 B. Witherington III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians, A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids—Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2006), 36–44.

249 The action of the Jews from Thessalonica shows some resemblance to narrative concerning Paul's troubles in Lystra (Ac 14,19). Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 308.

250 Although Paul opponents used against him the accusations that refer to customs and law of Gentiles, in two of three cases, the persecutors of Paul were Jews and not Gentiles.

251 D.W.J. Gill and C. Gempf, eds., *Graeco-Roman setting*, vol. 2 of *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 448–453.

252 A.C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids—Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 17–22.

253 The term Areopagus may refer to the Areopagus Council, which was “*traditional Athenian aristocratic court*”, or to the hill Areopagus, where the council took their meetings. The context of verse 19 where the term is used suggests the second possibility, but the context of verse 22 suggests rather the first possibility. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2600–2603.

after the speech.²⁵⁴ The philosophers argued with Paul (Ac 17,18), others however, though considering Paul to be their inferior, were friendly enough to invite him to present his teaching to the council (Ac 17,18–20).²⁵⁵ In this way, Paul somehow attracted their attention and so created the opportunity to proclaim the Gospel to most influential people in the city.

Paul's opponents from Thessalonica persecuted him also in Berea, which forced Paul to flee as far away as Athens. Accompanied by people from Berea, Paul reached Athens, where he probably intended to undertake mission activity. This supposition is supported by an order for Silas and Timothy to come to Athens as soon as possible. Paul was angered by the idolatry of the Athenians (Ac 17,16–17) who worshiped all the gods known to them and even those whom they did not know (Ac 17,22–23). Athens was famous for its religious pluralism, although this does not necessarily mean that the Athenians were particularly religious.²⁵⁶ This religious pluralism becomes the topic of Paul's discussion with everyone in the city, including Jews, God-fearers and Gentiles (Ac 17,17). In some cases it turns to academic discussion with the philosophers, and in some cases it becomes the reason for Paul's humiliation by others who despise his inferior knowledge or dismiss his proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus (Ac 17,18.31). However, Paul's new teaching attracted sufficient attention to enable him to address the Areopagus assembly in order to clarify points of his teaching (Ac 17,1–20).²⁵⁷

Luke mentions some Epicureans and Stoics among those who argued with Paul, which indicates that Paul had to face Greek philosophical materialism.²⁵⁸

254 H. Conzelmann, "The Address of Paul on the Areopagus," in *Studies in Luke-Acts*, ed. L.E. Keck and J.L. Martyn, 217–230.

255 Depends on interpretation of the term ἐπιλαμβάνω, which can mean *taking along* or *arrest*, and on the interpretation of the phrase Ἄρειον πάγον—*Ares' Hill*, which can refer to the place (Ac 17,19) or to the juridical council (Ac 19,22). It is possible to see in the action of Athenians simply inquiry or more seriously a trial. Judged on the basis of the whole section Ac 17,16–34, the first possibility seems to us to be more accurate. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 314.

256 Paul's statement in Ac 17,22 should be understood as sarcasm and not as commendation. See Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 520.

257 The Areopagus was not only the place of meeting but it was "*the main administrative body of the city*" and "*chief court of Athens*". Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 139; D.W.J. Gill and C. Gempf, eds., *Graeco-Roman setting*, vol. 2 of *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, 447–448.

258 Comparing these two philosophical schools, Paul's teaching has much common with the Stoic school in matters concerning ethics and cosmology, and almost no common points with the Epicurean school. A.D. Nock, *Early Gentile Christianity and its Hellenistic*

Epicureans accepted gods as having a material essence, but without having any relations with the human world. For them the main goal of human life concerns pleasure, which for them consisted in freedom from pain, disturbing passions and superstitious fears.²⁵⁹ Stoics accepted that god is an essential part of the world, just as the soul is related to the human body, but the pantheist divinity exists as a perfected matter that dwells in each being, giving reason and order to the world. As the main goal of human life they promoted living according to nature, which meant for them subordination to reason, the principle creating order in the world from various elements, and not to be dominated by human emotions or human self-sufficiency. Luke also mentions “others” who disagree with Paul’s religious concept,²⁶⁰ indicating that most probably Paul had to face also a fundamentalist form of religious pluralism. The “others” recognised Paul’s teaching as being “new” and based on fragmentary knowledge, which is a source of humiliation for Paul (Ac 17,18) and arouses suspicion concerning his teaching (Ac 17,19–20). It seems that the action of the “others” was something different from arresting Paul, in order to put him on a judicial trial, but still it had strong relation to a suspicion concerning relevancy of the new teaching to the Athenian’s religious systems.²⁶¹

The speech is structured according to the rhetorical standards of Greek speeches.²⁶² The speech begins (Ac 17,22) with an *exordium* (ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι) that includes a *captatio benevolentiae* (κατὰ πάντα ὥς δεισιδαιμονεστέρους ὑμᾶς θεωρῶ). This is followed by a very short *narratio* (Ac 17,23a), which refers to what was already presented in the background section (Ac 17,17–12), and it creates the basis for the *propositio* (Ac 17,23b—ὁ οὖν ἀγνοοῦντες εὐσεβεῖτε, τοῦτο ἐγὼ καταγγέλλω ὑμῖν). It is followed by a *probatio*, which is the longest part of the speech (Ac 17,24–29). The speech ends with a *peroratio* (Ac 17,30–31).

The *exordium* indicates the addressees of Paul’s speech, who are the Athenians in general, and not a particular group, such as, for example, philosophers. It contains also a *captatio benevolentiae*, which probably has a hidden

Background (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 96. Concerning the Epicureans, see J. Neyrey, “Acts 17, Epicureans, and Theodicy,” in *Greeks, Romans, and Christians*, ed. D. Balch (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 118–134.

259 Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 376.

260 Zerwick translates τί ἂν θέλοι ὁ σπερμολόγος οὗτος λέγειν as “what on earth is he trying to say? What is he supposed to be driving at?” See Zerwick and Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis*, 409.

261 Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 330–331.

262 We will follow the structure of the speech proposed by Witherington, with the exception of the problem of the lacking *narratio* (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 518).

double meaning.²⁶³ For the addressees it can take a positive meaning due to the proverbial religiosity of the Athenians. But from the point of view of the speaker, a monotheist, it can take a negative and ironic meaning.

The *narratio* is reduced here to only one sentence, but refers to the narrative of the previous section (Ac 17,16–20), explaining on the one hand the reason for this kind of captatio *benevolentiae*, and on the other hand giving the main ground for the *propositio*. Paul in Athens paid close attention to the religious life of the society, and found it irritating because it was based on so much ignorance. In Athenians' well-designed religious system Paul found a point, which could serve as ground for his exposition of their ignorance and errant thinking.²⁶⁴

The *propositio* is a simple answer to the question posed in v. 19, which at the same time indicates the topic of the *probatio*. It indicates that Paul is proclaiming the God that they yet do not know, but already in some way respected.

The *probatio* given by Paul contains teaching concerning the divine nature that is in opposition to the Athenians' cult of images of the gods. The God proclaimed by Paul is the creator and absolute ruler of all existing things, and He has no need of any material things. Humans cannot either close Him in buildings or fully understand Him, but they can seek Him with success. An image of god is not divine, and the God proclaimed by Paul has no image. In this way Paul proclaimed to the Athenians Jewish monotheism.²⁶⁵

The *peroratio* is a conclusion based on the argument given in the *probatio*, and here Paul declares his conviction that the Athenians, after acknowledging true worship and the true God, should change their ways of thinking and abandon idolatry. This is framed within the perspective of God's judgment, which will be accomplished when humanity is raised from the dead by God. At that point Paul drives his speech to the point where the person of Jesus was about to be introduced to the audience, however, his speech is interrupted by the criticism and mockery of the listeners.²⁶⁶

263 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 520; W. Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles* (London: Oliphants, 1973), 190. For a different opinion, that the term takes only a positive meaning, see Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 140.

264 The fact of the existence in Athena an altar for an unknown God, serves as a very strong argument, which to some extent authorised Paul's proclaiming of the new teaching in the city. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 335–336; E. Norden, *Agnostos theos. Untersuchungen zur Formengeschichte religiöser Rede* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1913), 121.

265 In fact, the speech without verse 37 would have little in common with the Christian kerygma. M. Dibelius, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, 63.

266 Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 342.

B.2 *The Meaning of the Speech*

The opening address to the audience in v. 22—“*Men of Athens*”—refers to a group of Athenians more extensive than the Areopagus court.²⁶⁷ It is followed by the phrase “*I see that in every way you are very religious*” referring to the exceptional religiosity of the citizens, who were famous for religious tolerance of all cults, and showed this in the number of temples, altars and statues of gods in the city.²⁶⁸ It is possible to understand Paul’s words here as praise, and that Paul intended it to be understood in this way by his audience.²⁶⁹ But due to Ac 17,16–17,29 it is difficult to accept that the phrase really reflects Paul’s attitude towards the religiosity of the Athenians. Paul was not impressed with idolatry in general and the idolatry in Athens in particular, which makes it impossible to suppose that he is praising the Athenians or he is lying to them. Luke’s Paul used the *captatio benevolentiae* in order to catch the interest of the listeners, what was a typical rhetorical element in speeches of the time.

Verse 23 is a very short *narratio*, but when connected with Ac 17,16–20,29 it gives the necessary explanatory background for the starting point from which Luke’s Paul chose to begin. In the pantheon of Athenian gods was also place, in the form on an altar, for unknown gods, probably in order both to avoid offending foreigners visiting the city and to give them an opportunity to make the sacrifices for their own gods.²⁷⁰ Luke’s Paul used this religious courtesy to present himself as a herald of the God they had have not yet known but respected through their general attitude.²⁷¹ Although the existence of the altars for “unknown gods” (plural) is attested by literature, existence of an altar for the “unknown god” (singular) is still unproven, which makes it possible to propose that the Lukan Paul modified the reality in order that it would serve more accurately his rhetorical purpose, which concerns presentation of the only one God.²⁷² The last part of v. 23 (*the unknown God you revere is the one I proclaim to you*) is the *propositio* in the rhetorical structure of the speech, which indi-

267 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 493–494. Conzelmann, “The Address of Paul on the Areopagus,” 217–230.

268 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 521–523.

269 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2626–2629.

270 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 140–141.

271 Zerwick translates the word εὐσεβέω as *reverence*, where most English translations have *worship*. Although the meaning of the word refers to worship, in the context of Ac 17,23 it seems more appropriate to think of respect towards the gods of foreigners rather than implying that the Athenians worshipped unknown gods. See Zerwick and Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis*, 410.

272 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 607.

cates the Paul's claim to be teacher to Athenians in matter concerns religious, namely true God and true worship.

Verse 24 is a beginning of the *probatio* (Ac 17,24–29), which is a presentation of the God believed in by Luke's Paul, whom he wishes to proclaim to the Athenians. First of all, Paul presents the divinity as being the creator of the world, with a presentation based on the Book of Genesis, the point of view of the speaker that is correlated with ideas taken from Plato, representing the point of view of the audience.²⁷³ The created world includes heaven and earth, which is a conviction shared by Jewish and Greek cosmology.²⁷⁴ As the creator and the Lord, God does not live in a building like humans do. This was basic attitude of Jews towards the temples of Gentiles, however they did not apply this approach to the Jerusalem Temple.²⁷⁵ The statement, although it was not generally accepted in Greek and Hellenistic culture, was also known to Greek philosophy.²⁷⁶

Verse 25 gives another explanation of the divine nature, which concerns a self-sufficient of God. God is totally independent and has no need of human service, because He in effect is in the service of humans in the sense being the source of human existence. This rhetoric contains some hidden message that the true God needs nothing from human to exist, compared to the gods that could not exist without the human help. Paul's statement concerns only the existence of God but it does not refer to the worship of God, which was requisite as a sign of devotion. However, it does not mean that God depends on human worship.²⁷⁷ This thought is known to the late biblical writings (Macc 14,35) as well as to Greek philosophy (Euripides, Seneca).²⁷⁸

Verse 26 explores further the situation of humankind as created by God, and it is a preparation for an answer to a question concerning the purpose of human existence if God has no need of human service.²⁷⁹ Paul's convictions that all human come from the one person and that they spread across

273 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 141.

274 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 525.

275 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2640. Neil points to the fact that this kind of rhetoric is applied to the Jerusalem Temple by Stephen (Ac 7,48). Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 191.

276 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 315.

277 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2641–2642.

278 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 142. In biblical texts expressing early Jewish thought of the relationship between God and humankind, there are indications of this being required by God.

279 The verse indicates details about God's providence, which contains creation of humankind, spreading humankind around the world, and limiting their life by time and boundaries. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2645–2653.

the earth, are based on the Book of Genesis, however it is disputed if the second conviction should be interpreted geographically or philosophically.²⁸⁰ The philosophical interpretation of the phrase stresses the limitation of human nature, which is not destined to eternal life on this earth.²⁸¹ The geographical interpretation points to the fact that every nation on the earth is constrained within borders and is limited to historical epochs. This latter geographical interpretation seems to fit better with the purpose of the speech, urging that the Greeks should also start to search for the one God who calls them, what is the main aim of Luke's narrative in the section concerning the second mission journey.

Verse 27 gives an explanation concerning the purpose of God's creative action and the limits of humans dwelling on the earth.²⁸² By the expression "*so that they might seek the deity*" Luke's Paul indicates to the Greeks that the purpose of human life is to seek and worship the one God, who is the Creator, and not be content with His creation.²⁸³ Paul is convinced that it is possible to come to knowledge of God even without divine revelation, which is reserved to the Jews, but by natural revelation from observation of the created world.²⁸⁴ This is indicated by the expression "*that they might grope around for Him and find (Him)*", which strongly indicates the possibility (use of optative mood) that even Greeks can ψηλαφήσειαν—to feel around, to grope around and finally can be led to believe (εὕροιεν—*might find*) in Him.²⁸⁵ The end of the verse contains Paul's typically Jewish opinion that God is near to humans (*Ant.* 8.108), in opposition to Greek materialism, which separates the divinity from this world.²⁸⁶ The final expression: "*indeed he is not far from any of us*", which shows strong

280 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 142–144.

281 In context of vv. 25–27 this interpretation seems to be irrelevant, since the aim of the section is to expose God's providence and not to develop a philosophy of nature.

282 J.B. Lightfoot, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2014), 233; Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 526.

283 Zerwick thinks that ζητεῖν expresses Paul's doubt; he expects that they should seek and worship the one God but in fact they do not. Zerwick and Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis*, 411.

284 Bruce sees here reminiscence of Paul's teaching presents in Rom 1,20. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 338.

285 The grammatical construction of verse 27 shows its very strong conditional sense. S.E. Porter, *Paul in Acts*, LPSt (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2001), 148.

286 Roman philosopher Seneca writes: *prope est a te deus, tecum est, intus est—God is near you, he is with you, he is within you* (Ep. 41.1). Seneca, *Epistulae Morales* vol. 1, LCL, (London: Harvard University Press, 1953), 272–277.

confidence, serves as an introduction of the statement presented in the following v. 28 concerning dependence of human existence.

Verse 28, based on the expression presented in verse 27: *indeed he is not far from any of us*, is another typically Jewish conviction that human life belongs to God who is the source of life. This conviction was also known to Greeks, who referred in this context to Zeus.²⁸⁷ In the case of Jews, this is a basic religious conviction, and for the Greeks it is part of their religious literary heritage. By indicating the common points for both such different traditions and such different religious systems, the Lukan Paul on the one hand recognised that within the pagan traditions there are seeds of truth, although settled in different contexts but shared also by the Jews, and on the other hand, he to some extent sought to make the Jewish religious system more acceptable to Greek hearers. References to Greek poets serve Paul's rhetorical purpose as the ground for the statement to be presented in verse 29.

Verse 29 is the last sentence of the *probatio* presenting the logical conclusion of argument of the section. The conclusion concerns the idolatry of Athenians who take the product of human hands and crafts, such as statues, images, and altars, to be gods to whom worship is due. The true God has no image and He Himself is not the image created by human hands according to human will and purpose. Luke's Paul states that the worship of images of gods created by human hand is not logical (*ought not to suppose*) and is wrongdoing. Human should not worship the images of gods made by himself but he should seek the God, who is creator of all that exists.²⁸⁸

After finishing the *probatio* with the statement presented in v. 29, Luke's Paul turns to the *propositio* of his speech (v. 30). It concerns the necessity for all people in the whole world to repent, to believe in the one God. All religious knowledge of the Greeks (and others) is considered by Luke's Paul to be *ignorance* and the time they have live in is a *time of ignorance*.²⁸⁹ This time was pardoned by God until now, but not anymore (*but now, overlooking the times of*

287 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 499–450. Longenecker thinks that the Lukan Paul quotes two Greeks poets. The statement “*since it is in him that we live, and move, and exist*” comes from the Cretan poet Epimenides (poem *Cretica*) and the statement “*We are all his children*” comes from the Cilician poet Aratus (*Phaenomena* 5). Longenecker, “Acts,” 984.

288 Verse 29 contains direct criticism (presented in form of a logical conclusion) against Athenian polytheism, which, although on the level of philosophical discourse, recognised differences between material symbols of divinity and the divinity itself, but in common practice it made no difference between material symbol and divinity. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 340; Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 145.

289 A similar idea is presented in Paul's speech at Lystra (Ac 14,16), as well as in the Letter to Romans (Rom 1,18–23, 3,25). Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 192.

ignorance), since God by his servant Paul is charging all people (including the Athenians) to change their way of thinking.²⁹⁰ With this statement, Luke's Paul indicates that also for the Gentiles the time of change has come. They cannot stay any longer in their ignorance, without taking full responsibility for their actions, since they have heard the truth about their origin and now they are about to hear the truth concerning their future destination.

The time that has begun is an eschatological time and it will end with judgment, which takes a universal character.²⁹¹ It seems that for Luke's Paul, the eschatological time strongly refers to knowing of the one God, making the knowing of God to be of critical importance at the moment of judgement. The motif of judgment is here (v. 31) presented as a reason (καθότι) for which all people, coming to a knowledge of the true God, should change their way of thinking. The judgment will be meted out not by God himself.²⁹² It will be done by a human person,²⁹³ and that person was chosen by God.²⁹⁴ The proof that God chose this man is the event of his resurrection from the dead.²⁹⁵ Although the Greeks may have known of humans who after death were in charge of judging the dead, they were not familiar with the idea that a dead person would be raised from death in order to judge the living.²⁹⁶ The one raised from death, God's agent who will judge the living, should be introduced more specifically at this point, which would seem to be the next logical step in the author's narrative, but Luke decided that the speech should be interrupted by opposition from the side of the audience irritated by this last statement by Luke's Paul. According to Luke's account Paul did not finish the speech. It was interrupted at the point concerning resurrection of the human body. Generally, the idea of resurrection from the dead as a universal act, which will

290 This is the moment what Lukan Paul turns to a strictly Christian perspective, which allows him to call the Athenians to repentance (conversion), since the eschatological times had begun. By using the phrase τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πάντα πανταχοῦ—to all people and everywhere Paul goes beyond limiting his address to the Athenians and gives the phrase universal meaning.

291 General eschatology, as distinct from imminent eschatology, is the focus here. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 146.

292 Greek materialism did not accept the idea of humans being judged by god. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 340–342. Note the connection between resurrection and judgment, in early Christian eschatology. R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol. 1 (New York: Scribners, 1951), 77.

293 This concept was acceptable. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 503.

294 This concept could also be accepted for the Greeks.

295 This concept was impossible in Greek thought. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 503.

296 Plato, *Gorgias* vol. 5, LCL, (London: Harvard University Press, 1952), 518–533.

occur at the end of time, was rejected by Greek philosophers. Resurrection of the human body was a subject of discussion for the Greeks only in two cases: as something impossible, or as an individual, occasional, or supernatural phenomenon.²⁹⁷ Although Paul spoke about individual resurrection, his message was not accepted. This was probably due to the fact that Paul proclaimed not only that Jesus was raised by God, which would be possible to accept on certain conditions, but he also proclaimed that the God will judge the world by the man (Jesus), whom He raised from the dead. What the Greeks most probably understood from Paul's speech was that they as living mortals would be judged not by God himself but by a man who had died and was raised by God. The combination of the resurrection of the human body with God's judgment was too much for the Greeks to accept because both concepts were hardly ever mentioned in their philosophy. Luke indicates precisely the point in Paul's speech where it was not easy to cross the borderline between the materialism of Greek philosophy and the theocentric teaching of the Judeo-Christian view. Conzelmann writes that vv. 31–32 prove that Paul achieved his purpose, however it may be asked if it was really Paul's purpose to end his speech in the very point, which was a reason for his speech at the Areopagus (Ac 17,18–20).²⁹⁸ It seems to us that Paul had intended to continue with his proclamation, but the audience was not yet ready to cross the border that his speech presented. Verse 32 shows two kinds of reaction to Paul's speech. One part of the audience directly mocks Paul, while the other shows some sign of interest in his speech. This is as much as Paul achieved at the Areopagus (Ac 17,33).²⁹⁹ Luke gives no more information concerning the second group of the audience.³⁰⁰ Instead, Luke merely mentions some conversions among the Athenians, which were not necessarily related with the speech at the Areopagus (Ac 17,33). Did the speech have a wider influence on the Athenians and lead them to conversion?³⁰¹ It is possible, but it is not a conclusion we can draw from Ac 17,22–34.

B.3 *The Function of the Speech*

The speech in Athens in Luke's short account concerning the second mission journey of Paul is placed between the short, schematic account referring to

297 A. Oepke, "ἀνίστημι," in *TDNT*, vol. 1, 369.

298 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 146.

299 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 503–504.

300 Witherington III is aware of the possibility of an alternative, dismissive understanding of the Luke's statement concerning the second group: "enough for now, perhaps another time" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 532).

301 Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 343–344.

mission activities in Asia and Macedonia (Ac 15,36–17,1) and another short account concerning his long stay in Corinth (Ac 18,1–22). It seems that the speech is the main unit in the whole account concerning the second mission journey, which gives it a special importance for a number of reasons.³⁰² Firstly, the speech answers the question as to why Corinth and not Athens became the headquarters of the European part of his mission journey. Paul's short mission activities in Athens could hardly be called a success (Ac 17,34). Secondly, the speech shows that Paul's gospel concerning the resurrection of the body was not accepted by Greek philosophers. Luke indicates that in his proclamation of the one God and His servant Jesus, Paul did not go further the question of resurrection (Ac 17,32).³⁰³ Thirdly, the speech is presented without any support of miracles or other unusual action on the part of Paul, as a result of which it becomes a strictly intellectual attempt in philosophical discourse concerning religion.³⁰⁴ In this way Paul's mission was without success. Fourthly, the speech indicates that Paul in his sermon gave particular attention on the non-image concept of God that was characteristic of Jewish religion. God, the creator of all existing things (Ac 17,24), is not one of the gods created by human craft or artistic skills (Ac 17,29–30).

The speech at the Areopagus is not a record of Paul's speech, but it is rather Luke's version of the speech.³⁰⁵ While there is no real ground to doubt the historicity of the event itself, the speech in Ac 17,22–31 is not to be taken as a verbatim version of what Paul said at the Areopagus.³⁰⁶ Luke could have learned directly from Paul the information concerning the event and even something of the content of Paul's speech, but, as in many other cases, Luke used the information obtained from the primary source (Paul) according to the narrative concept he had created for the Acts of the Apostles. The speech as a unit is not separated from the rest of the accounts concerning the mission journey of Saul/Paul. The unit concerning the mission journey of the apostle contains three parts, corresponding to the number of mission journeys, in which each of the parts contains only one thematic speech. In the case of the first mission

302 P. Schubert, "The Place of the Areopagus Speech in the Composition of Acts," in *Transitions in Biblical Scholarship*, ed. J.C. Rylaarsdam (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), 235–261.

303 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 530–532.

304 Wilson says that Luke's speech "is not concentrating on the propagation of the gospel to the intellectual aristocracy of the pagan world; rather, he is addressing himself to the popular philosophies" (*The Gentiles and the Gentile mission in Luke-Acts*, 196).

305 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 146–248.

306 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 124–127.

journey the speech is that at Pisidian Antioch addressed to Jews, in which the aim is to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah. Luke's narrative concerning this speech shows that the proclamation of Jesus as the Messiah was a major obstacle for the Jews in general to accept Paul's gospel. In the case of the second mission journey, which was mostly directed to Gentiles (at least in sense of success), the speech is placed in Athens and is addressed strictly to a Gentile audience. In Luke's narrative arrangement, the speech shows that the main obstacles for the Gentiles to accept Paul's gospel were the ideas of the resurrection of the dead and the placing in an eschatological context the idea of judgment. In the case of the third mission journey, the speech of Paul is given in Miletus to the elders of the churches of Ephesus, consisting of both Jews and Gentiles. This farewell speech is given on the way back to Jerusalem, and in Luke's ordering of events it indicates that, despite many obstacles at the conclusion of his mission activities, Paul left many churches established in Asia and Europe ready to continue as churches on their own account.

In our opinion, the speech at the Areopagus should not be interpreted separately from the other two speeches. Each speech has a precise function in the narrative unity concerning the mission journey. All three speeches create in Luke's narrative a résumé of Paul's teaching during his missions, beginning among then Jews, then extending to the Gentiles, and concluding with Christian communities consisting of both Jews and Gentiles.

C The Speech of Paul at Miletus to the Elders of the Church in Ephesus (Ac 20, 18–35)

The speech to the elders of the church in Ephesus differs from Paul's other speeches in Acts first of all by the lack of an *exordium*, where usually the addressees of the speech would be presented.³⁰⁷ Clearly, we know the identity of the addressees from the context, but this lack of an *exordium* raises a question about the function of the speech. Is the speech addressed to some persons in particular, or does the lack of *exordium* indicate that it has a general character?

The text of Ac 20, 18–35

¹⁸ You know well the life that I always led amongst you from the very first day that I set foot in Asia, ¹⁹ serving the Lord, as I did, in all humility, amid the tears and trials which fell to my lot through the plots of the Jews.

²⁰ I never shrank from telling you anything that could be helpful to you,

³⁰⁷ Although there isn't any direct mention of addressee at the beginning of the speech, the addressees (the elders of the churches in Ephesus) are known from narrative part of the section (Ac 20,17).

or from teaching you both in public and in each house. ²¹ I earnestly pointed both Jews and Greeks to the repentance that leads to God, and to faith in Jesus, our Lord. ²² And now, bound in the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, ²³ except that in the every town the Holy Spirit except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me to me that imprisonment and troubles await me. ²⁴ But I consider my life of no value to myself, if only I may complete the course and the service that was allotted me by the Lord Jesus, which was to solemnly testifies to the Gospel of declare the good news of the love of God. But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of God's grace. ²⁵ And now, I tell you, I know that none of you, amongst whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom, will ever see my face again. ²⁶ Therefore I declare to you this day that I am not responsible for the blood of any of you, ²⁷ for I have not shrunk from announcing to you the whole purpose of God. ²⁸ Be watchful over yourselves, and over the whole flock, of which the Holy Spirit made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. ²⁹ I know that, after my departure, merciless wolves will come in amongst you, not sparing the flock, ³⁰ and from amongst yourselves, will arise people, who will teach perverse things, in order to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹ Therefore, be on your guard, remembering how for three years, night and day, with tears I never ceased to warn each one of you. ³² And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. ³³ I have never coveted anyone's gold or silver or clothing. ³⁴ You know for yourselves that I worked with my own hands to support myself and my companions. ³⁵ In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you need to help the weak, and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said himself: It is more blessed to give than to receive.

C.1 *The Structural Analysis of the Speech*

The speech is placed at the end of Luke's account concerning Paul's third mission journey (Ac 18,23–20,38). It is preceded by the account of Paul's return from Macedonia (Ac 20,1–16) and it is followed by the account of the voyage to Jerusalem, with a short stay at Caesarea (Ac 21,1–16). The speech, then, is placed at the centre of Luke's narrative concerning Paul's journey to Jerusalem (Ac 20,13–16).

The speech has a rhetorical form, but the precise nature of the rhetoric used here is a matter of disagreement among scholars.³⁰⁸ In fact, however, the structure of the speech can be readily determined on the basis of the content rather than on the basis of the formal rhetorical elements.³⁰⁹ Although the speech contains many elements characteristic of a farewell speech, the absence of some elements characteristic of such a form excludes it from being given that label.³¹⁰ Luke uses the elements of a farewell speech on purpose in order to use it as a conclusion to the account of Paul's mission activities.³¹¹ Extending over eighteen verses, ten of these refer to Paul (Ac 20,18–21.33–35) and eight verses refer to the elders of the community in Ephesus (Ac 20,25–32).³¹² The material concerning the person of Paul falls into three groups. The first is an account of Paul's mission in Ephesus (Ac 20,18–21). The second indicates Paul's awareness of his fate in Jerusalem (Ac 20,22–24). The third group gives examples of Paul's financial self-support, (Ac 20,33–35). This section, regarding Paul, creates a basis for the material referring to the elders of the community in Ephesus (Ac 20,25–32). This section too can be divided into three groups. The first contains Paul's teaching concerning the responsibility of the elders towards the church in Ephesus (Ac 20,25–28). The second refers to dangers, which the church will have to face (Ac 20,29–31). The third group contains Paul's encouragement of the elders of the community in Ephesus (Ac 20,31–32). In our opinion, the speech has a chiasmic structure ABB¹A¹:

A—Paul's attitude towards pastoral work (Ac 20,18–21),

B—Paul's fate in Jerusalem (Ac 20,22–24),

B¹—The fate of the elders of the church in Ephesus (Ac 20,25–32),

A¹—Paul's attitude towards material goods (Ac 20,33–35).

308 Dibelius thinks that the speech is a kind of *encomium* (*Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, 155–158). Watson thinks that the speech is an example of epideictic rhetoric. D.F. Watson, "Paul's Speech to the Ephesian Elders (Ac 20,17–38): Epideictic Rhetoric of Farewell," in *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in Honor of George A. Kennedy*, ed. D.F. Watson (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 184–208. Witherington III thinks that the speech is an example of deliberative rhetoric (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 613–614).

309 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 173.

310 See the arguments of Witherington III (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 611–612).

311 This statement will be explained later when we consider the function of the speech.

312 Kurichianil compares the speech to speeches from the Old Testament (Josh 23,2–16, 1 Sam 12,1–25, 1 Kings 2,1–9). J. Kurichianil, "The Speeches in the Acts and The Old Testament," *InThSt* 17 (2/1980): 181–186.

In this structure A-A¹ concerns Paul's attitude during mission work in Ephesus (particular approach) and probably during the whole of his mission activities (general approach), which on the one hand creates the picture of Paul, the apostle to Gentiles, and on the other hand serves as the ground for the main topic of the speech concerning the fate of Paul and the churches in Ephesus.³¹³ The issue of fates, both of Paul and the churches, seems to be the main aim of the Lukan Paul's speech, which within the narrative concept of Acts is linked with the following narrative about Paul's imprisonment.

C.2 *The Meaning of the Speech*

Paul addresses the speech to the elders of the church in Ephesus who were specifically invited to hear his last dispositions (v. 17).³¹⁴ Paul begins by pointing to his own example of mission activities among them (20,18–21).³¹⁵ In verse 18 he notes his constant and unchangeable conduct during his long stay in Ephesus as a fact that is well known to the elders.³¹⁶ This statement referring to Paul's life in Ephesus as exemplary for the elders forms the basis on which the whole speech is built. The elders knew not only Paul's teaching, but they also knew his life style, which stood to confirm his teaching.³¹⁷ Verse 19 shows Paul to be the man who with all humility served the Lord, in spite of unfair opposition on the part of the Jews who were constantly a source of trial and sorrow for him.³¹⁸ The meaning of the verse is that Paul faithfully served the Lord despite great personal cost.³¹⁹ In the midst of such unfavourable conditions he has not neglected any duties towards those who became the elders to the church

313 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 366–367.

314 C.K. Barrett, "Paul's Address to the Ephesian Elders," in *God's Christ and His People*, ed. J. Jervell, and W.A. Meeks (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1977), 107–121.

315 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3005.

316 Similar expression is found in 1 Thess 1,5.

317 Concerning this speech, Dodd is of the opinion that Ac 20,18–35 "contains so many echoes of the language of Pauline epistles that we must suppose, either that the writer had access to these epistles" (*The Apostolic Preaching*, 18–19).

318 Paul simply presents himself as the servant of Jesus, more precisely as the faithful servant. His faithfulness is underlined by use of three expressions ταπεινοφροσύνης καὶ δακρύων καὶ πειρασμῶν—*humility, and sorrows and trials*, which serves here as kind of summary referring to his suffering because of his service. Such summary appears also in Paul's letters (Rom 8,35–39, 1 Cor 4,11–13, 2 Cor 4,8–13, 6,3–10, 11,23–28).

319 Since Luke mentions Jewish opposition towards Paul in Ac 19,9 but he does not do it in Ac 19,21–40, the phrase "*that came to me through the plots of the Jews*" takes on a rather general meaning than a particular one, and it refers not only to Ephesian Jews but (at least) to Jews in Asia. Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 213.

in Ephesus (v. 20).³²⁰ He raised them up by proclaiming the Gospel, teaching them in every possible manner, whether in public or in private.³²¹ In his conduct he did not make any difference between Jews and Gentiles (v. 21).³²² He taught and preached to both groups in order that they might repent before God and believe in Jesus (20,21). The last statement indicates on the one hand the purpose of his service as the servant of the Lord among the inhabitants of Ephesus, and on the other hand it indicates the main topics of his teaching.³²³ In this way, in vv. 20–21 Paul offers an overview of the character of his mission.³²⁴

At this point of the speech Paul switches from the past account of his mission in Ephesus (Ac 20,18–21) to his present plan concerning his voyage to Jerusalem (Ac 20,22–24). Although the readers of Acts have been already informed about Paul's plans (Ac 20,3,16), the elders of the church in Ephesus know nothing about his decision. In verse 22, Paul presents a reason for the decision, which is presented as the matter for discussion. Paul says: νῦν ἰδοὺ δεδεμένος ἐγὼ τῷ πνεύματι—*now, see, I have been bound by the Holy Spirit*, thus making the Holy Spirit to be the agent of Paul's decision.³²⁵ It is not his personal conviction, but he is doing the will of the Holy Spirit, showing his obedience to divine guidance. This interpretation explains Paul's doubts concerning his future in Jerusalem.³²⁶ His doubts will be justified by a prophecy in Ac 21,4,11–14, and imprisonment in Jerusalem (Ac 21,27–23,11). Here Paul by saying τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον κατὰ πόλιν διαμαρτύρεται μοι—the *Holy Spirit in every city solemnly testifies*

320 Watson sees here Paul's answer to the potential accusation against him concerning neglecting his duty. D.F. Watson, "Paul's Speech to the Ephesian Elders, 197. Although it is possible, the positive context of Paul's speech suggests rather a progressive presentation of Paul's mission attitude, which has lack of any imperfection.

321 The first statement may refer to frank and bold speech of Paul. Indication of the places in the second part of the verse may refer to the fact that Paul's mission activities in Ephesus were not limited to the Synagogue and the hall of Tyrannus (Ac 19,8–9).

322 The information indicates that Paul's mission was addressed to Jews and Gentiles, according to Paul's mission pattern (first Jews and after Gentiles).

323 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 677.

324 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 361.

325 The Holy Spirit as the agent of Paul's mission activities is a central theme in Luke's approach in his presentation of Paul. See Ac 9,17, 13,2,4,9, 16,6–7,18.

326 The statement refers to another, at this stage of the narration not yet definite persecution, which Paul consciously expected (based on his experiences). Some scholars see here an analogy to the prophecies concerning Jesus' passion. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 361; Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3015. Since Paul was not executed in Jerusalem and what more Luke does not inform the readers of Paul's death, such analogy seems to be less possible. In our opinion, the statement refers to rejection of Paul in a way similar to rejection of Jesus or his disciples by the Jews in Jerusalem.

to me most probably not only refers to his experience of persecution during his mission activities, but also to future persecution in Jerusalem (v. 23).³²⁷ Based on these experiences and the Holy Spirit testimony, Paul expects captivity and oppression in Jerusalem, however he takes it as part of God's plan to which he is obedient. What Paul most cares about is accomplishing his ministry as the Herald of God's grace.³²⁸ To achieve that, he is ready to sacrifice his own life.³²⁹ Verse 24 in a different way expresses the same statement "Paul the faithful servant of God in proclaiming the kerygma", which was presented in verse 19. For Paul, proclaiming the name of Jesus to the inhabitants of Jerusalem is the accomplishment of the mission for which he had been chosen by Jesus.³³⁰ The speech is placed at the end of Paul's mission activities among the diaspora Jews and the Gentiles, but it does not mean that Paul sees his task as having been accomplished, rather he is convinced that the task will be accomplished only when the inhabitants of Jerusalem hear his speeches.

In the third part of the speech (Ac 20,25–32) Paul gives teaching directly concerning the elders of the church in Ephesus. The reason for the teaching is the formal statement of his final departure (v. 25).³³¹ The elders will never meet Paul again, what changes drastically the reality of the church in Ephesus, which had been established and was nurtured by Paul.³³² He will no longer be able to provide for the church in Ephesus and the elders must stand on their

327 This interpretation is supported by the same agent (the Holy Spirit), who orders (v. 22) and who testifies (v. 23). Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 620. Concerning a use of term "chains" in Paul's letter, see Phil 1,7,13–14,17, Phlm 13. Concerning "afflictions", see 2 Cor 1,4, 2,4, 4,17, 6,4, Phil 1,17, 1 Thess 3,7.

328 This idea is found also in Paul's letters: Rom 5,15, 1 Cor 1,17, 3,13, 9,24–27, 2 Cor 5,18, Gal 1,12, 1 Thess 2,9, Phil 2,16.

329 Similar expressions are found in Paul's letters: 2 Cor 4,7–12, 6,4–10, 1 Thess 2,8, Phil 1,20–23.

330 It is worth noting that in Ac 9,15 the nation of Israel is the last to be mentioned. Ac 22,17–22 also takes on a new meaning when read from this perspective. Paul started his ministry among the Jewish diaspora and continued it when he successfully approached Gentiles, but he still did not undertake the mission among Jews in Jerusalem. Luke precisely mentions that after his conversion Saul in Jerusalem joined the apostles and for short time worked with them as a co-worker and not independently. However, Luke also indicates that Paul independently proclaimed the gospel in Jerusalem to the diaspora Jews (Ac 9,28–29).

331 It seems that the Lukan Paul had a different mind concerning future work than Paul had during the writing of the Letter to Romans (Rom 15,24–28). This statement gives the speech a blended character, where the farewell speech elements are mixed with elements characteristic of the testaments style.

332 In verse 18, Paul made remarks concerning his life among Christians in Ephesus, and now in verse 25 he makes remarks concerning his proclaiming of God's kingdom.

own as those responsible for the believers there (v. 26). As long as Paul was staying in Ephesus, he took full responsibility for proclaiming and protecting the truth of the gospel, but now he transfers the responsibility for this task to the elders. However, before Paul placed this responsibility upon the elders, he had already prepared them sufficiently by teaching them without any restrictions (v. 27).³³³ There is nothing of the revelation concerning God's salvation plan that was not taught by Paul to the elders. They are now prepared to handle the responsibility, as Paul notes in v. 28, which contains many important statements differently interpreted by scholars.³³⁴ The first statement concerns the necessity to look to themselves, which is grounded on reasons presented in verse 30, and to care for the community, what is grounded on the reasons presented in verse 29.³³⁵ The reason that they must look to themselves lies in the fact that the Holy Spirit has established them as *overseers* of the communities in Ephesus, what means if they were doing wrongly the whole community would do wrongly.³³⁶ The second statement refers to identity of the elders, who were elected by the Holy Spirit to be ἐπίσκοπος—*overseer*.³³⁷ The term is used here in its Hellenistic meaning rather than in its post-apostolic hierarchic meaning, and it refers to the various social and political offices, including the office of educator.³³⁸ The third statement concerns function of the elder within the community of Christians, which refers to their administrative position. They are the shepherds of God's Church; and the expression indicates their duty towards the community in sense closer to the Jewish tradition (God is the shepherd and Israel is the God's flock), rather than to Greek contemporary

333 The statement repeats the statement included in verse 20. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 174.

334 According to Conzelmann verse 28 "offers paraenesis for the postapostolic age" (*Acts of the Apostles*, 174–175). However, Johnson sets the interpretation of verse 28 within the apostolic age (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 362–363).

335 Concerning textual problems in the text (v. 28), see B.M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 234–236.

336 Notice that πρεσβυτέρους τῆς ἐκκλησίας—the elders of the church in Ac 20,17 is here changed to ἐπισκόπους ποιμαίνειν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν—overseers (bishops), the shepherd of the church. Conzelmann takes this as an indication that v. 28 is a postapostolic age paraenesis (*Acts of the Apostles*, 174). Concerning the term ἐπίσκοπος see H.W. Beyer, "ἐπίσκοπος," in *TDNT*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 608–622. Note also that it is the Holy Spirit, and not Paul, who has made them to be overseers. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 623.

337 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 678–679.

338 The context, in which the Lukan Paul placed the term, relates to the task of proclaiming and defending the true kerygma and not to the exercise of hierarchic power (Ac 20,26–27).

image concerning shepherds in general.³³⁹ The fourth statement concerns soteriological and Christological teaching that the community in Ephesus was obtained by blood of Jesus.³⁴⁰ The elders are in duty bound to guard the communities, which belongs to God by the price paid by His Son. The community is called “*the church of God which He purchased with His own blood*”, which is an unusual expression in the New Testament as a reference to the Christian community.³⁴¹ The unusual phrase underlines that the Church in Ephesus, which the elders have to look after, is something of very special value, and this gives added importance to the duty of the elders. Verse 28 does not simply contain words of advice but it contains also a hidden warning, which is explained more fully in vv. 29–31. Verse 29 gives an answer to the question concerning the meaning of the expression “*to look ... all the flock*” (v. 28). The elders have to look after all the flock (the community) because they are exposed to aggressive attacks by people from outside, who will attempt to destroy the community (v. 29).³⁴² This will happen after Paul’s ἀφίξις—*departure*. The term should be understood as a euphemism for Paul death, and not in the literal sense of Paul’s departure from the elders, which indicates that the attack can come not immediately, but it certainly will come.³⁴³ The elders have to “look to yourselves”, because the time will come when those, who should “look after all the flock”, begin to speak deceptively, tearing apart the community (v. 30). Their action will be deliberate, with the intention of getting disciples for themselves.³⁴⁴ The dangers from outside (v. 29) and from within (v. 30) are here presented as the biggest challenge for the elders who are fully responsible for the fate of the community in Ephesus.³⁴⁵ Because of these two threats the elders always must

339 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3033–3040.

340 The expressions “the church of God” with the soteriological addition, although here is placed in the particular context (Ephesus), takes a general meaning applied to the whole church. Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 214.

341 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 362–363.

342 The phrase ἐγὼ οἶδα—I *known* indicates Paul’s certainty concerning this issue, since the use of the perfect tense indicate that the action has already occurred (probably) in other places but not yet in Ephesus. Lightfoot, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 265. The vivid expression *savage wolves* may suggest organised and systematic persecution.

343 This is the interpretation of most scholars. Witherington III, however, interprets it as referring to Paul’s departure from the area (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 624).

344 This indicates that certain individuals and not doctrinal systems are in Paul’s mind. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3045. The individual interest (v. 30) contrasts the idea of God’s church where the elders should be the shepherds of God’s flocks (v. 28).

345 S. Walton, *Leadership and Lifestyle. The Portrait of Paul in the Miletus Speech and 1 Thessalonians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 81–82.

be on their guard if they want to fulfil their task (v. 31).³⁴⁶ They should conduct themselves in the same way as Paul did during his three-year stay in Ephesus, when he was always (day and night) on guard looking after all the flock.³⁴⁷ Most probably this task was not an easy one, because it caused Paul much anguish. In v. 25 Paul commits those who until now were under his care into the care of God and His word, by which they can be built up in their identity and stability.³⁴⁸ By obeying God's words the elders will find their inheritance among the believers who have been sanctified (v. 32).³⁴⁹ Committing the Elders to God is the climax of Paul's transmission of responsibility for the Ephesus communities.³⁵⁰

From v. 33 on Paul once more returns to his own example (Ac 20,18–21) in order to show the elders the meaning of correct conduct, but this time the example concerns their attitude towards material goods (Ac 20,33–35), which refers to three different aspects of the issue. The first aspect concerns a correct reason for service to the community, which here is presented in a negative way. In v. 32 Paul declares that any desire to possess the goods belonging to the believers, who were under his care, was not a reason for his conduct.³⁵¹ Indirectly, Paul expresses his expectation that the Elders will show an identical attitude. The second aspect concerns earning by work money that is necessary for living. Paul confirmed this attitude by the manual work he had done during his stay in Ephesus in order to make provision for his own needs as well as the needs of his co-workers (v. 34).³⁵² Again, although it is not directly expounded, the effect sought by presenting Paul's attitude is to encourage the hearers to the same conduct.³⁵³ The third aspect refers to assistance of those, who are in need. Paul sees the work as a source of financial stability, which also makes it

346 The use of γρηγορέω—*watch, keep awake*, which is a key word in Paul's eschatological *paraenesis* (cf. 1 Thess 5,6), may suggest in the context of vv. 29–31 that the focus here is on immanent eschatology.

347 In this verse Paul again presents his own attitude as the model for the Elders, which should be remembered in the sense of doing accordingly. The fact that Paul mentions the constant admonishing can on the one hand expose difficulties in learning the Christian lifestyle from the side of converted Ephesians, and on the other hand it may point to the one of the Elders' duties, which concerns admonishing the communities. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 393–394.

348 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 364; Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 215.

349 It is on this condition that the elders will be recognised and accepted by the faithful believers of Jesus.

350 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3053.

351 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 681.

352 See 1 Cor 4,12, 9,15–18, 1 Thess 4,11, 2 Thess 3,6–10.

353 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3060.

possible to help those who are unable to secure their own needs (v. 35).³⁵⁴ Paul gave the example of this attitude, which the Elders should show to the believers in Ephesus.³⁵⁵ In Ac 20,33–35 the focus is thrown on the social obligation of the elders, who should serve the community without expectation of being rewarded, but rather they should work for their needs by their own hands, and what they earned should be used also to secure the daily needs of the believers.³⁵⁶ These rather high standards of obligations the Lukan Paul imposed on the Elders (direct meaning) are in fact the obligations that concern the elders in every Christian community (indirect meaning).

C.3 *The Function of the Speech*

The speech is the last one in the group of the thematic speeches concerning the mission journeys (Ac 13,15–41, 17,22–31, 20,18–35), and it is placed at the end of Luke's narrative concerning the third mission journey of Paul. Each of the accounts concerning the three mission journeys contains only one thematic speech, which seems to take on a specific function within the account referring to the particular journey as well as in the account referring to all Paul's mission journeys.

Concerning the function of the speech in the narrative of the third mission journey of Paul, this speech, which contains many features characteristic of a farewell speech, serves as an indicator of Paul's achievements during his long stay in Ephesus. His preaching brought fruitful results in the whole of Asia, and the community in Ephesus is the best witness to the apostle's mission zeal and lifestyle fully subordinated to achieving the task, for which he had been appointed by the Lord. Because Paul's mission journeys in Luke's account are now coming to a conclusion, those who became Christian and took the position of elders in the community must now take full responsibility for guarding the communities and protecting the truth of the Gospel that had been taught by Paul. The speech is the missionary's last words to the churches established by him, in which he hands over the baton in the race to proclaim the Gospel to

354 The term ἀσθενέω—to be weak, powerless, is used by Luke in reference to physical illness (Lk 4,40, 5,5, 12,27), but in Paul's letters it refers to weakness and incapacity (1 Cor 4,12, 2 Cor 12,10, Gal 4,11, 2 Tim 2,6). Concerning the relation between verse 35 and the sayings of Jesus, see R.F. O'Toole, "What Role Does Jesus' Saying in Acts 20,35 Play in Paul's Address to the Ephesian Elders?," *Bib* 75 (1994): 329–249.

355 In fact the words "*There is more happiness in giving than in receiving*", which the Lukan Paul refers to Jesus, are not found in the Gospels, but Lk 12,33 has a somewhat similar expression. The phrase as used here is a Greek aphorism. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 171.

356 Walton, *Leadership and Lifestyle*, 82–84.

the end of the world.³⁵⁷ Consequently, the speech contains not only examples of Paul's attitude concerning pastoral and social matters (Ac 20,18–21,33–35), but also teaching concerning the responsibility of the elders and the problems they will have to face.

In the narrative of the three mission journeys of Paul this last speech (Ac 20,18–35) serves as the indicator of Paul's achievement. Generally speaking, the speech at Pisidian Antioch (Ac 13,15–41) deals with the main problem involved in proclaiming the Gospel to Jews living in Diaspora, namely, to show that Jesus is the Messiah. The speech at the Areopagus (Ac 17,22–31) concerns the main problem encountered when proclaiming the Gospel to the Gentiles, namely, belief in the resurrection of the dead. These two problems are not limited to the particular context in which they are presented, but in the narrative concept of Luke they serve as general statements concerning the characteristic of the mission to each group. Finally, the speech to the Ephesian elders presents the fruits of Paul mission services. At the end of his mission activities, despite much hardship and difficulties (Ac 13,16–41, 17,22–31), Paul had managed to create a community consisting of Jewish and Gentile Christians. The community is ready to live on their own. In Luke's narrative concept concerning Paul's mission journeys, the community in Ephesus is the best example of Paul's whole mission achievements, which can serve as the general characteristic of his life in service of Lord.³⁵⁸

3.2 *The Jerusalem Council*

A The Speech of Peter to the Council (Ac 15, 7–11)

The narrative at Ac 15,1–35 interrupts the account of the three mission journeys (Ac 13,1–20,38), and for this reason the function of this section has attracted much scholarly attention.³⁵⁹ In spite of its brevity it contains three thematic speeches offering one theological message. Among these three speeches that in Ac 15,7–12 seems to be of special importance due to a statement it contains, which became a crucial point in the self-understanding of the Christian

357 J. Lambrecht, "Paul's Farewell-Address at Miletus (Acts 20:17–38)," in *Les Actes des Apôtres: traditions, rédaction, théologie*, ed. J. Kremer (Lueven: Leuven University Press, 1979), 307–337.

358 Bruce writes: "It is primarily his farewell address to the church of Ephesus (represented by its elders) but also in a secondary way his farewell to the Gentile churches in the Aegean world" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 429–430).

359 For general outline of the discussions concerning Ac 15,1–35, see Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2194–2210.

community consisting of Jews and Gentiles. An analysis of this text will help identify this point and understand its meaning.

The text of Ac 15, 7–11

⁷ Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you that through my lips, the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. ⁸ And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us. ⁹ He made no distinction between them and us, when he purified their hearts by their faith. ¹⁰ Then why are you putting God to the test, by placing on the necks of these disciples a yoke, which neither our ancestors nor we were able to bear? ¹¹ But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they.

A.1 *The Structural Analysis of the Speech*

The speech is placed in the negative context of the controversy concerning the way in which Gentiles can be saved (Ac 15,1–3).³⁶⁰ In Antioch some believers from Jerusalem were spreading the opinion that without conversion to Judaism, Gentiles who believe in Jesus cannot be saved (Ac 15,1). This opinion was opposed by Barnabas and Paul, leading to a bitter discussion to which no satisfactory conclusion could be reached (Ac 15,2). It forced both sides to seek the support of the apostles and the elders of the community in Jerusalem. In Jerusalem both sides promoted their position in order to gain support (Ac 15,4–5). According to Luke's account Barnabas and Paul got the support of the apostles, who made speeches in favour of their way of thinking, while their opponents got the support of believers who were Pharisees. Luke refers to prolonged discussion in Jerusalem (v. 7), thus indicating that agreement could not be reached and that the matter needed to be solved in the authoritative way.³⁶¹

The first authority to speak is Peter. His speech, which is an example of deliberative rhetoric, begins with a brief *exordium* (v. 7a) indicating the addressees.³⁶² It is followed by a *narratio* containing two arguments. The first argument presents Peter as being the protagonist of the mission among the Gentiles by the will of God (v. 7b). The second argument concerns the fact that God testifies in favour of the Gentiles by granting them the same gift (the

360 H. Van de Sandt, "An Explanation of Acts 15,6–21 in the Light of Deuteronomy 4,29–35 (LXX)," *JSNT* 46 (1992): 73.

361 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2230–2231.

362 Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*, 90.

Holy Spirit) that the disciples had received (v. 8).³⁶³ After the *narratio* Peter presents the *propositio*, which takes the form of a rhetorical question presenting the thought of the Pharisees as being opposed to God's will (v. 10a). In the following *argumentatio* Peter shows that the obligation of the Law is a burden that even Jews could hardly fulfil (v. 10b). The last verse of the speech (v. 11), containing the statement that all people are saved through faith, is the *peroratio* of the speech.

The speech is followed by a short conclusion indicating the result of the speech (v. 12). This speech of Peter prepares the way for the accounts given by Barnabas and Paul about their experiences regarding the Gentiles, who accepted faith in Jesus.³⁶⁴

A.2 *The Meaning of the Speech*

In Acts 15 Luke presents the issue of the circumcision of Gentiles (which should be understood as a sign of conversion to Judaism) as a crucial point for future of the group called "Christians". Circumcision, as a sign of the covenant, which required acceptance of the Law, was for Jews (certainly, at least, for some Palestinian Pharisees) a form of "dogmatic statement" concerning salvation.³⁶⁵ The Jews who came from Jerusalem to Antioch were of the

363 See Ac 10,34–48. This short speech consists of three parts arranged in a chiasmic form A-B-A¹, where:

- A (vv. 7–8) contains the arguments that it is the will of God that the disciples should associate with the Gentiles who received the same gift of the Holy Spirit because they share the same faith;
- B (v. 9) contains the most important statement that the Gentiles are "clean" because God Himself cleans their hearts though their faith;
- A¹ (vv. 10–11) contains the teaching that it is against the will of God to require of the Gentiles that they obey the Law in order to obtain salvation, because all obtain salvation through faith Jesus Christ.

364 Conzelmann thinks that v. 12b is a doublet of v. 4, and is merely an example of Luke's customary style (*Acts of the Apostles*, 117). However, the *Sitz im Leben* of the Barnabas' and Paul's accounts in v. 4 and in v. 12 are different. In v. 4, Barnabas and Paul addressed to the authorities, and hence to a small, exclusive group of listeners. In v. 12, Barnabas and Paul are speaking to the whole community (including their former opponents), which had accepted Peter's argument.

365 Salvation is here understood as something limited to those, who belong to the chosen nation. Donaldson shows that at least some Jews accepted the possibility that righteous Gentiles could be saved even without conversion to Judaism. T.L. Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle's Convictional World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 275. This tolerant attitude of Palestinian Jews, attested also in the Acts (Ac 11,18–26), could however change in context of growing nationalism.

opinion that Christians, who converted as Gentiles, but without subjecting themselves to the Law, could not be saved solely on the basis of their faith (Ac 15,1). The problem of association between Jews and Gentiles that arose within the Christian group was presented and explained in Luke's account of the case of Cornelius, in which Peter was the main figure (Ac 10,1–33). In addition, the problem of baptising Gentiles and their acceptance among the Christians was presented by Luke in the narrative concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius (Ac 10,34–11,18). A problem, which Luke is going to present in the narrative concerning the meeting in Jerusalem, refers to the necessity of conversion to Judaism in order to be saved of those Gentiles, who by the faith are already Christians (Ac 15,1).³⁶⁶ The issue caused bitter debate not only in Antioch (Ac 15,2) but also in Jerusalem (Ac 15,7).³⁶⁷ Peter, in an authoritative manner, and with the arguments he used in his speech, brought a conclusion to the discussion.³⁶⁸ His speech begins with reference to the event concerning the case of Cornelius, which Luke had presented (Ac 10–11). Peter as the head of the Twelve was chosen by God to proclaim the Gospel to the Gentiles, thus leading them to faith in Jesus (v. 7).³⁶⁹ Here, Peter presents himself as the pioneer in the Jerusalem community who was involved in the mission to the Gentiles. In this way Peter refers to a matter of common knowledge in the Jerusalem community, which in the context of the heated controversy about welcoming Gentiles can function as pointing the way forward. His experience concerning relations with Gentiles convinced him that God knows (v. 8) that the hearts of the Gentiles have been cleaned by the faith (v. 9), and this makes them equal to the Twelve in the eyes of God.³⁷⁰ The sign confirming the fact that the Gentiles have the faith (Ac 10,44–48) is the gift of the Holy Spirit coming down on them in the same way as it happened at Pentecost to the Twelve and others. In this way Peter points to the fact that the

366 Probably the requirement does not mean that the faith is not enough for salvation, but rather that for those of the Gentiles who believe in Jesus as the Messiah it is also necessary to acknowledge and follow the Jewish tradition. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 286–287; Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 115. However, some scholars interpret the requirement in the light of Paul's thought as presented in the Letter to the Romans and the Letter to the Galatians. See Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 258–259; Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 450–451.

367 In fact the debate put in doubt the mission in Antioch, the mission of Barnabas and Paul, as well as Peter's actions in the house of Cornelius. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2210–2211.

368 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 330.

369 This verse refers to the account of Cornelius presented in Ac 10,9–43, and it exposes God as the agent of Peter's action. See Wilson, *The Gentiles and the Gentiles mission in Luke-Acts*, 171–195.

370 Verse 8 contains idea that had been presented in Ac 11,15,17.

hearts of the Gentiles (but not necessarily the body) were cleaned by the faith. This indicates indirectly that the most crucial element of Peter's argumentation, which lies in his deep conviction concerning the equality of Jews and Gentiles before God, based on the same faith and attested by the same Holy Spirit. Thus it is the same faith and not the same customs or the same tradition that makes people equal. Based on this critical statement Peter, in the form of a rhetorical question, accuses those who require circumcision for the Gentiles of acting against God (v. 10).³⁷¹ God proved that for Gentiles faith is sufficient to cleanse them, and this makes it unnecessary that the Law be imposed upon them.³⁷² Another argument is that the Law was impossible to fulfil even for Jews, suggesting that the Gentiles would also not be able to do so.³⁷³ Indirectly, the Lukan Peter accused some Judaeo-Christians of consciously offering misleading teaching that concerns the way of salvation.³⁷⁴ The last sentence in the speech, which serves as the *peroratio*, shows that Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians believed that salvation is an act of Jesus' grace (v. 11). Sharing the same conviction, Jewish Christians should not require that Gentile Christians walk the same path as the Jews. The last statement of Peter is a direct answer to the thesis proclaimed by those who came from Judea (Ac 15,1), and it points to the grace of Jesus as being the source of salvation.³⁷⁵

A.3 *The Function of the Speech*

The context of the speech shows that some issues concerning the relationship between Jews and Gentiles within the group of Jesus' believers were controversial not only in Antioch but also in Jerusalem.³⁷⁶ In both cities there was

371 The phrase *πειράζετε τὸν θεόν*—*put God to the test* indicates that resistance to God is the focal point. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 262–263

372 Conzelmann rightly points out that Jews and Jewish Christians never regard the Law as the *unbearable burden* or the *yoke* (with negative connotation), which shows that the usage of the term in Ac 15,10 reflects rather a strictly Christian evaluation of the Law, characteristic of the post-apostolic period (Gal 5, 1), (*Acts of the Apostles*, 117). Note also the use of the aorist active form of the verb *ἰσχύω*—*be able* suggesting that Peter sees the problem as something that has already been resolved. Concerning the use of term *yoke* see Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2236–2238.

373 The Jews were aware of the fact that it is impossible to fully obey the Law, just as they also acknowledged that salvation is always due to the grace of God.

374 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 547.

375 Neil rightly points that the last statement in Peter's speech has very strong Pauline sentiments (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 171).

376 It seems that in Antioch the problem was practical one, which was caused by an experience. In Jerusalem, the problem was treated rather on academic level and it does not directly consider the group of disciples in Jerusalem.

debate but little prospect of agreement. Luke presents Peter's speech as being the final statement, but it is not presented as the result of discussion; it is an authoritative decision taken by the leader of the Twelve (vv. 7a, 12a). Based on his experience, Peter pronounces that Gentiles are "clean". This is not given as a human decision, but it is presented as the will of God (vv. 7–8), because of the faith of Gentiles. Faith became the central point in the Peter's argumentation on whether Gentiles could be considered "clean", as it is the central point in debates concerning the issue of the salvation of both Jews and Gentiles (vv. 9, 11). In Peter's speech faith is given priority over the Law (Ac 15,1).

In Luke's narrative the speech is placed between the first mission journey (Ac 13–14) and the second mission journey (Ac 15,36–18,22), but it forms part of a narrative, which is not directly related to the accounts concerning the three mission journeys. The narrative concerning the so-called Jerusalem council is an independent unit that, despite its brevity, contains three speeches referring to the way in which Gentiles believing in Jesus can be accepted in a community that was still mainly Jewish. Ac 15,7–11 is the first speech in the series, and it refers to the faith as being the way to cleanse human hearts and make them capable of receiving salvation by the grace of Jesus. It is the faith, and not obedience to the Law, which in eyes of God makes the Gentiles worthy to receive the same gift of the Holy Spirit that the Twelve had received, and so receive the same hope of salvation. Based on experiences similar to the case of Cornelius, the community in Jerusalem and Judea have learned that God rewards everyone with the gift of the Holy Spirit because of the faith (Ac 11,18). The problematic issue remained the relation of the faith of Gentiles based on the grace of God through faith in Jesus, but not rooted in Jewish religious tradition, and the faith of the Jews based on the grace of God as given in the Law. Some were of the opinion that the faith of Gentiles should be rooted in, or assimilated to, Jewish religious tradition, which in effect would mean obedience to the Law. However, Peter states that this is not the will of God (Ac 15,10a), because even Jews were unable to obey the Law (Ac 15,10b). Consequently, both Jews who believe and Gentiles will be saved by the faith in Jesus and not by obedience to the Law. It is pointless, then, to require that Gentiles convert to Judaism.

In the speech Peter declares in an authoritative way that conversion to Judaism is not necessary for Gentiles in order to obtain salvation. Their faith in Jesus is sufficient in the eyes of God to award them with the same gift of the Holy Spirit and the same hope of salvation that had been given to Jews who believe in Jesus. The function of the speech is to present this teaching, which creates the foundation for the way of accepting Gentile Christians among Jewish Christians. Namely the teaching concerns faith in Jesus, as the source of cleanliness and salvation. This gives the speech the character of a constitu-

tive discourse, which ends with a juridical decision. The head of the Twelve in Jerusalem made this declaration, which on the one hand indicates the beginning of a new self-understanding of the Christian community, and on the other hand it serves as the basis for the next two speeches in Luke's narrative. In the context of the three topical speeches, the speech of Peter takes on the function of an introductory speech, where the main problem and its basic solution are presented, creating the base for presentation of further connected problems (the new identity versus the old tradition—the speech of James; sharing the same table—the decree).

B The Speech of James (Ac 15, 13–21)

The speech of James follows directly on that of Peter, and it not only agrees with Peter's opinion but it presents further arguments, which makes it possible to create the final statement known as "the Decree of the Jerusalem council" (Ac 15,23–29). While Peter's presentation is based on his private experience, which is judged to show the will of God, James' speech provides the scriptural evidence to authorise that conclusion, as well as to offer solution that will make consensus possible.³⁷⁷ It indicates that in Luke's narrative concerning the Jerusalem council the speech of James develops the theme that had been presented in the previous speech.

The text of Ac 15, 13–21

¹³ Brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴ Simeon has explained how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from amongst them a people to bear his name. ¹⁵ This agrees with the words of the prophets, as it is written: ¹⁶ *After this I will return, and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen; from its ruins I will rebuild it, and I will set it up,* ¹⁷ *so that all other peoples may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles over whom my name has been called. Thus says the Lord, who has been making these things* ¹⁸ *known from long ago.* ¹⁹ Therefore, in my judgement, we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, ²⁰ but we should write to them to abstain from food that has been polluted by being sacrificed to idols, from impurity, from eating the flesh of strangled animals, and from blood. ²¹ For in every town, for generations past, there have been those who preach Moses, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath.

377 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 117; Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2241.

B.1 *The Structural Analysis of the Speech*

The speech directly refers to the speech of Peter (Ac 15,7–12), but it makes no reference to the accounts by Paul and Barnabas concerning their first mission journey (Ac 13,1–14,28).³⁷⁸

The speech, which is an example of deliberative rhetoric, starts with a casual address serving as the *exordium* (v. 13b).³⁷⁹ It is followed by a short *narratio* referring positively to Peter's speech (v. 14).³⁸⁰ The next section is the *propositio* containing James' assertion that Peter's speech agrees with the words of the prophets (v. 15). The *argumentatio* of the speech consists of a quotation from the Book of Amos concerning Gentiles who will believe in God (Am 9,11–12).³⁸¹ The last part of the speech is a *peroratio* containing James' summary account of what caused the council to be convened (vv. 19–21). First, James indirectly refers to the obligation of circumcision (v. 19), which he thought was not necessary for Gentiles.³⁸² However, he thought it to be necessary that Gentiles obey those regulations of the Law that, if not adhered to by Gentile converts, would make it impossible for Jewish Christians to associate with Gentile Christians (v. 20). Secondly, James notes that the Law was and still is read and interpreted in Synagogues wherever Jews live, making it possible for Gentile Christians to learn the Torah without conversion to Judaism (v. 21).

The narrative following the speech contains the text of the council's decree, which was sent to Gentile Christians in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia (Ac 15,22–35).³⁸³

B.2 *The Meaning of the Speech*

After the speech of Peter (Ac 15,7–11) and mention of the mission experience of Barnabas and Paul (Ac 15,12) the last to speak during the council is James,

378 Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 293–294. It strongly indicates James' political skills, since referring to the head of the Twelve was more astute, and more persuasive than referring to a particular side of the conflict.

379 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 456.

380 Luke's James uses the Aramaic form of Peter's name (Συμεών). Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 264.

381 The quotation of the Book of Amos is taken from the LXX version but contains some significant variants. For details see Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 265.

382 Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 295.

383 The account concerning the council in Jerusalem contains little narrative and editorial material, which makes the speech of James as well as the other two speeches in the section an essential part of the narrative structure of Ac 15. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 456.

the head of the Jerusalem community.³⁸⁴ He is the host of the council and his speech serves to present a final proposal (Ac 15,19) made after the presentation of different opinions (Ac 15,7).³⁸⁵ The use of the imperative ἀκούσατέ μου—*listen to me* indicates not only the leadership of James, but also it presents his speech not merely as another opinion in the discussion but as a concluding statement.³⁸⁶ After addressing to the gathered community in general (v. 13), James refers to Peter's speech (v. 14) and declares that what Peter told about his experience with Gentiles had been foretold by the prophets (v. 15).³⁸⁷ This means that everything that is happening is a fulfilment of God's will proclaimed by the prophet Amos. The wording used is to be noted: ὁ θεὸς ἐπεσκέψατο λαβεῖν ἐξ ἐθνῶν λαὸν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ—*God first arranged to enlist a people for his name out of the Gentiles* (v. 14).³⁸⁸ This includes the Gentiles within "the people of God", which was a term strictly reserved for Jews as being chosen among other nations.³⁸⁹ Here James is of the same opinion as Peter, maintaining that by the sovereign will of God, Gentiles have been counted among "the people of God".³⁹⁰ All that was said by Peter about the Gentiles in his speech was in accordance with the words of the prophets, giving his words the authoritative support of the Scripture (v. 15). James' *propositio* (v. 15) is followed by *argumentatio* of the speech (vv. 16–18), which is a quotation from the Book of Amos (Amos 9,11–12), carefully chosen by Luke to describe accurately the real question that was discussed during the meeting.³⁹¹ First James shows that now is the time when God rebuilds the tent of David, an expression that refers to the restoration of

384 See R.E. Van Voorst, "James," in *Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. D.N. Freedman (Grand Rapids—Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2000), 669–670; Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 554.

385 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 117.

386 This opinion is supported by the use of διὸ ἐγὼ κρίνω—I *judge, I decide* in v. 19, which here takes the meaning not merely of a strong private opinion, but an authoritative decision, which however is not the final one. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 295. Lightfoot writes that the statement is authoritative but not final (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 199).

387 In fact James only quotes the prophet Amos, but similar texts can be found in Deut 14,2 and Zech 2,11. Concerning the controversy of using the text of LXX for James' speech addressed to the Christians with Jewish roots, see J. Dupont, *Laos Ex Ethnon: Etudes sur les Actes des Apôtres* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1967), 361–365; Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2245–2255; Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 457–458.

388 This extremely short *narratio* refers to the speech of Peter (Ac 15,7–11) and the events at Cornelius' house (Ac 10,1–11,18), which are already known to the readers.

389 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 264; Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 172.

390 N.A. Dahl, "A People for his Name (Ac xv.14)," *NTS* 4 (1957–58): 319–327.

391 For a discussion of the significant textual differences between MT and LXX in the quotation of Amos 9,11–12 see Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 459. The LXX text is more suitable as a basis for the opinions put forward by James and Peter.

the Davidic Dynasty (v. 16).³⁹² What is now happening shows that it is not a time of abandoning God's paths but the time of fulfilment of David's line in Jesus, the Messiah.³⁹³ A part of this eschatological process is the conversion of Gentiles (v. 17a), who also belong to God's people in Messianic times (v. 17b). The idea that in the restored house of David there is place not only for the Jews but also for Gentiles, was foreseen from of old, and is now fulfilled according to God's will (v. 18).³⁹⁴ This quotation from Amos is considered by Lukan James to be a sufficient basis for making his strongly authoritative statement that circumcision is not a necessary obligation for Gentiles (v. 19).³⁹⁵ A use of *μὴ παρενοχλεῖν*—*do not trouble* shows that James thinks that circumcision is possibly the main obstacle preventing the Gentiles from turning to God. In the context of Ac 15,10–11, circumcision is here not limited to the particular ritual but it takes on the wider meaning of became subject to all the regulations of the Jewish Law. Although James recognised Gentiles freedom from the Law, however, he maintains it is necessary that Gentiles obey those regulations of the Law that would make it possible for Gentile and Jewish Christians to associate, especially in sharing table fellowship (v. 20).³⁹⁶ The regulations contain four obligations.³⁹⁷ The first obligation is to avoid "*the pollution of idols*" (idolatry), what refers to a prohibition concerning eating meat that had been sacrificed to idols, as verse 29 clearly explains.³⁹⁸ It does not merely refer to eating in the

392 M.L. Strauss, *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts: The Promise and its Fulfilment in Lukan Christology*, JSNTSS 110 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 180–192.

393 The text refers to the messianic age when the eschatological Temple will be built and the nations will turn to the God of Israel. A similar idea is found in Jer 12,15–16. See E. Richard, "The Creative Use of Amos by the Author of Acts," *NovT* 24 (1982): 37–53.

394 D. Secombe, "The New People of God," in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, ed. I.H. Marshall and D. Peterson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 349–372.

395 This will become a part of the decree (Ac 15,23–29), what in our opinion supports interpretation of James' words as a strong authoritative decision but not yet final. Circumcision is here understood as the obligation to obey the Law. Although the word circumcision is not explicitly used the meaning of the expression "*do not trouble*" is obvious from the context of the speech.

396 The obligations of the Law, which Gentile Christians must follow, are presented in verse 20, and are also found in Ac 15,29 and Ac 21,25. See the analysis by Witherington III in *The Acts of the Apostles*, 460–467, where he discusses also some textual difficulties encountered in the texts.

397 These obligations have nothing in common with problem of salvation but they refer to the way, which make possible association of Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians within the same Christian community. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 556–557.

398 This prohibition can be found in Lev 17,8, where it refers also to Gentiles living among Jews. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 118–119.

presence of the idols, it refers also to the purchasing of meat, participation in feasts or obligatory social parties, where the meat sacrificed to idols could be on the table.³⁹⁹ The second obligation is to abandon “*unchastity*”, what was usually regarded by Jews and Jewish Christians as being a common practice among Gentiles often related to their worship of idols.⁴⁰⁰ The term πορνείας etymologically means *fornication*, *prostitution* but in the wider sense it describes unchastity, which refers to all kind of sexual immorality.⁴⁰¹ The third obligation is to refrain from eating the meat of “*what is strangled*”, referring to the meat of animals that were not slaughtered ritually.⁴⁰² Since Jewish tradition prohibited eating the meat with blood remaining in it, for both Jews (Gen 9,4) and Gentiles living among Jews (Lev 17,10–14), for Gentile Christians (not living among Jews) disobeying this part of Law would make it impossible for Jewish Christian to associate with them.⁴⁰³ The fourth obligation is to abandon drinking “*the blood*”, which is connected with previous obligation, since if the blood remains in the flesh, those who eat this meat also drink the blood contained in it.⁴⁰⁴ In Jewish tradition the blood of humans and animals is viewed as the carrier of life and the place where the soul dwells (Gen 9,4, Lev 17,11, Deut 12,23), and because of that drinking blood in any form was prohibited.⁴⁰⁵ All these restrictions are of practical significance. Without these regulations, coexistence between the Jewish and Gentile Christians could not be possible

399 See Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2270–2271; Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 462.

400 See Lev 18,6–30, 2 Macc 6,4–5, 1 Thess 4,3, 1 Cor 8,1. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 461–462.

401 Among all four obligations this is the only one that directly refers to moral standards rather than to the table sharing issue, what creates the problem of interpretation. The majority of scholars interpret the term strictly in the context of sexual immorality but they differ in its limitation. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 557–558; Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2271–2274; Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 173–174. Some scholars, although they recognise the etymology of the term, take the term in its metaphorical meaning, referring to idolatry (understood as the law of covenantal fidelity), which is supported by use of the term in the Scriptures (Hos 5,4, Ezek 16,15–46, 23,7–35, Jer 3,6–8, Wis 14,12). Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 266–267. We are of the opinion that in this context the term refers to behaviour required from Gentile Christians during the table sharing meetings, which may indicate their different standards of proper conduct, including sexual behaviour.

402 The text refers to prohibition found in Lev 17,15. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 119.

403 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2275.

404 This prohibition is found in Lev 17,10–14, but in a Jewish context it is related to eating the meat of animals that still contained blood, and should not be understood as a reference to drinking the blood alone.

405 O. Böcher, “ἀίμα,” in *EDNT*, ed. H. Balz and G. Schneider, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 37–39.

(v. 20). Although the Gentile Christians in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia are not forced to obey the whole Law, according to James they should be obliged to observe those parts of the Law, which for Jewish Christians are fundamental and the neglect of which would make table fellowship between the two groups impossible.⁴⁰⁶ With reference to the Moses' Law, James states that reading and interpreting of the Law is an old tradition in each Synagogue.⁴⁰⁷ With this, he implies that all necessary explanations concerning the obligations, as presented here by James (v. 20), as well as other parts of the Law, can be learned by Gentile Christians through hearing the reading of the Law and its explanation during the Sabbath gatherings.⁴⁰⁸

B.3 *The Function of the Speech*

The speech of James appears in Luke's narrative after long and vivid discussion (v. 7), the speech of Peter (vv. 7–11) and the account of Barnabas and Paul (v. 12). This makes it to be a conclusion of the whole debate in the form of an authoritative statement (v. 19). James, together with Peter, acts here as the head of the council. A part of his speech referring to the obligations (vv. 20–21) will become a part of the decree of the council (Ac 15,28–29). James is the only one among the speakers mentioned by Luke who has not had experience with Gentile Christians. Because of this, although he agreed with Peter in the matter concerning observance of the Law by Gentile Christians (vv. 13–19), nevertheless he found it necessary to oblige Gentile Christians to learn and observe some parts of the Law, which are necessary to enable table fellowship between these two groups of Christians. James (using ἀλλὰ at the beginning of verse 20) introduces practical considerations. This creates a necessary balance between Peter's fundamental statement (Ac 15,9–11) and the reality of relations between the Jewish and Gentile Christians in the Diaspora (Ac 15,19–20).

The speech is the second among three speeches concerning the Jerusalem council and its construction shows that it serves as a bridge between the speech of Peter and the decree of the council. The first part of the speech (vv. 13–19) contains the scriptural arguments, which on the one hand serve as

406 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2277.

407 Concerning a reading of the Torah in the synagogue, the Lukan James notes three crucial aspects: long-standing tradition, widespread and regular knowledge and use. This indicates the existence of a whole system, where Gentile Christians can confirm James' teaching (broader sense) as well as learn more about Torah (wider sense). The second part would be particularly important for believing Pharisees, for whom proclaiming the whole Torah to Gentiles was of crucial importance. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 296.

408 D.R. Schwartz, "The Futility of Reading Moses (Acts 15:21)," *Bib* 67 (1986): 276–281.

an argument for Peter's statement (Ac 15,9), and on the other hand provide a reason for agreement on the part of James. The second part of the speech (vv. 20–21) contains material that cannot be found in Peter's speech but it will appear in the decree of the council (Ac 15,28–29). The speech of James carries the argumentation forward, developing ideas presented in the introductory speech by Peter in order to prepare for the conclusion contained in the decree, which gives it a progressive character.

C The Decree of the Jerusalem Council (Ac 15, 23–29)

In the very short narrative concerning the Jerusalem council (Ac 15,1–35) the decree serves as a third speech, which is intended to give an answer to the problem presented in Ac 15,1, but surprisingly it gives only conditions on which Gentile Christians will be accepted among Jewish Christians community. This gives the decree not only a peculiar character, but probably also indicates the important function of the speech in the narrative structure of Acts concerning the mission in Judea and Samaria (particular context) and the mission to Gentiles (general context).

The text of Ac 15, 23–29

²³ The brethren, the apostles and the elders, to the brethren of Gentiles origin in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia, greeting. ²⁴ Since we have heard that some people have gone out from us, without instructions from us, and have troubled you with words unsettling your minds, ²⁵ we have decided unanimously to choose representatives and send them to you, along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, ²⁶ who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. ²⁷ We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. ²⁸ It has been decided by the Holy Spirit and ours to lay no further burden on you beyond these necessary conditions: ²⁹ that you abstain from food offered to idols, from blood, from eating the flesh of strangled animals, and from impurity. If you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell.

C.1 *The Structural Analysis of the Speech*

The third speech (Ac 15,23–29) in the narrative concerning the Jerusalem council (Ac 15,1–35) takes the form of an official document sent by the Jerusalem community to the communities in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia.⁴⁰⁹ The speech

⁴⁰⁹ An argument supporting the idea that the document be considered as the speech is found in verse 27, where we are told that the text of the letter will be presented orally to the

follows directly the two previous speeches and in fact is a form of conclusion to the themes introduced in them.⁴¹⁰ The speech starts with an *exordium* in which the speaker and the addressees are identified (v. 23). This is followed by a *narratio*, which gives the reason for the council (v. 24), the official delegation of the Jerusalem community (vv. 25–27a) and purpose of their mission (v. 27b). The *propositio* of the speech gives the final decision of the council (v. 28), which agrees with the proposals made by James.⁴¹¹ In the *argumentatio* the obligations are presented that the council considered to be imposed on the Gentiles (v. 29a). The last part of the verse 29 is the *peroratio*, in which the Gentiles are encouraged to act according to the decision of the council (v. 29b). After the speech, there is a short account (Ac 15,30–35) concerning the reception of the decree by the community in Antioch, which shows that the community found the decree to be acceptable (v. 31).

C.2 *The Meaning of the Speech*

Before Luke presents the document, he gives a short account concerning the official delegates who will be sent to Antioch together with Barnabas and Paul (v. 22).⁴¹² The apostles and the elders of the Jerusalem community chose Judas called bar Sabbas and Silas.⁴¹³ Both are presented as prophets (v. 32) who stayed in Antioch for some time, building up the community in Antioch by words of encouragement and strengthening the brothers.⁴¹⁴

The *exordium* of the document contains precise information concerning the senders and the addressees of the document (v. 23). The authority who sends the document is identified as the apostles and the elders of the Jerusalem community.⁴¹⁵ The addressees of the document are Gentile Christians in

communities by Judas and Silas. We follow here the opinion of Kennedy who sees Ac 15,23–29 as the document as being similar to “the rescript of a Roman magistrate to query from a subordinate and had the rhetorical characteristic of a public letter of the Roman period” (*New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, 467–468).

410 Johnson, *Decision-Making in the Church*, 46–87.

411 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 436–437.

412 In verse 22 they are called “*leading men in the brotherhood*” and in verse 32 they are called “*prophets*”.

413 There is no further information given concerning this Judas called bar Sabbas. Silas is known from elsewhere as Paul’s co-worker (Ac 15,41, 16,19, 17,4, 18,5, 2 Cor 1,19, 1 Thess 1,1). Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 344.

414 Luke presents them twice as the official delegates of Jerusalem community (Ac 15,22.25–27) probably in contrast with those mentioned in Ac 15,1.24.

415 The textual problem of verse 23 creates a problem concerning identity of the creators of the decree. Were they the apostles and the elders of the community or the apostles, the

Antioch, Syria and Cilicia.⁴¹⁶ This information shows the subordinate standing of the communities mentioned.⁴¹⁷ The identification of the addressees of the document shows that the decree of the Jerusalem council had a particular character.⁴¹⁸ The *narratio* of the speech begins with reference to the source of the problem raised in Antioch. The authorities of Jerusalem community admitted that brothers who disturbed the life of the Antioch community had come from the Jerusalem community (v. 24a),⁴¹⁹ however they were not authorised delegates of the Jerusalem community (v. 24b).⁴²⁰ This simple and straightforward statement removes on the one hand any responsibility from the part of the leaders of the Jerusalem community, and on the other hand deprives the action of the “brothers from Judea” of any legality or support from the Jerusalem community. In this way a basis for a legal statement by the authorities of the Jerusalem community is established. Two official delegates of the Jerusalem community are chosen to go together with Barnabas and Paul to Antioch (v. 24) in order to verbally confirm what is written in the decree (v. 27b).⁴²¹ Before their names are mentioned, they are first presented as people

leaders and the community? Taking into consideration Ac 15,2 the first option is more suitable. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 284–285; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 437–438.

- 416 Since Cilicia is not mentioned as mission territory until Ac 15,41 some scholars recognised the decree as a literary creation. E. Haenchen, “Quellenanalyse und Kompositionsanalyse in Act 15,” in *Judentum, Urchristentum, Kirche: Festschrift für Joachim Jeremias*, ed. W. Eltester (Berlin: S. Töpelmann, 1960), 153–164. However, Cilicia could be included in the decree due to Paul’s long stay in the region after his conversion (Ac 9,30, 11,25).
- 417 Indirectly it may possibly indicate that the places have been disturbed by people from Jerusalem (Ac 15,1). Although Luke writes directly only about Antioch, the summary in Ac 16,4 suggests that the problem was not limited only to the one place but had wider scope.
- 418 James’ reference to the decree in Ac 21,25 takes a universal character, without specifying the group of Gentile Christians (contrary to Ac 15,23). It is surprising, however, that James gives this information to Paul, who was present himself at the Council, together with James. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 376.
- 419 Luke in Ac 15,1 speaks about brothers from Judea. The term ἀνασκευάζω—to upset, unsettle is a *hapax legomenon* in the NT and it is not found in the LXX. The term has negative connotations extending from simple “distraction” to the extreme of “destroying”. Use of this term in the context of the activities among believers in Antioch indicates clearly the danger posed by the attitude of the “brothers from Judea”, and fully explains the reason for the strong opposition by Barnabas and Paul. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 276.
- 420 Contrary to legitimate delegates, Judas and Silas (Ac 15,22.25–27).
- 421 Since the narrative of Ac 15,30–34 does not mention oral testimony of Judas and Silas, their function mentioned in verse 27 “who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth” guarantees the authenticity of the decree, what seems to be necessary

who had committed their lives to Jesus (v. 26).⁴²² With such strong references, Judas and Silas, as official delegates, will have full authority to take the decree to Antioch (v. 27).⁴²³

The *propositio* begins with mention of the authority that made the decree (v. 28a), and gives some general information concerning the content of the decree (v. 28b). When introducing the authority that formed the decree, a new agent is introduced who was mentioned earlier only once (Ac 15,8) in the narrative concerning the Jerusalem council. Although the consensus found in the decree⁴²⁴ is based on the council debates (Ac 15,7), the speeches by Peter and James (Ac 15,7–11, 13–21), and the witness given by Barnabas and Paul (Ac 15,12), all this is not seen by the apostles and the elders as mere human agreement. It is seen as a decision of the Holy Spirit and the authorities of the Jerusalem community. The phrase *ἔδοξεν γὰρ τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ καὶ ἡμῖν*—*it has been decided by the Holy Spirit and by ourselves*—is explained variously by scholars.⁴²⁵ Conzelmann rightly thinks that “this verse contains Luke’s concept of church and Spirit”, and by this he probably means that in Luke’s theological concept the main agent in the time of the Church is the Holy Spirit.⁴²⁶ Always when the Church or one of the believers is about to take a serious decision, the

if we take into consideration that only one side of the conflict (Paul and Barnabas) are going back to Antioch, and naturally suspicion among their opponents in Antioch could possibly surface. It is possible that, although the problem in Antioch was caused by Jews from Judea, however they received support from some Jewish Christians, who were the members of community in Antioch. Witherington 111, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 469.

422 The beginning of verse 25 (we have decided unanimously) indicates the same information presented in verse 22 and it refers to the act of choosing Judas and Silas as the decision made by the whole community and not only by the apostles and elders as it was in case of the decree’s redaction.

423 For similar function of letter-bearer, see Eph 6,21–22, Col 4,7–8.

424 W. Rakocy, “Bedziecie moimi swiadkami ... [Be my Witnesses] (Ac 1,8),” in *Dzieje Apostolskie. Listy sw. Pawla* [The Acts of the Apostles. The Paul’s Letters], vol. 9 of *Wprowadzenie w mysl i wezwanie Ksiag biblijnych* [Introduction to Thoughts and Ideas of the Bible], ed. A.S. Jasinski et al. (Warsaw: Akademia Teologii Katolickiej, 1997), 39–41.

425 See Bruce: “So conscious were the church leaders of being possessed and controlled by the Spirit that he was given prior mention as chief author of their decision” (*The Book of the Acts*, 298). Johnson: “The invocation of the Holy Spirit as a partner to the decision has an odd sound to contemporary ears, but it nicely captures the dynamic of the process as portrayed by Luke” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 277). Witherington 111: “Indeed the invoking of the Holy Spirit means that the words have divine sanction and so should be readily obeyed” (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 469).

426 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 120. This pattern goes throughout the Acts of the Apostles from Ac 1,6 until Ac 28,25.

agency of the Holy Spirit is mentioned (Ac 1,5, 2,4, 4,8.31, 5,32, 7,55, 8,17, 9,17, 10,44, 13,2, 16,6, 19,6, 20,23). The decree of the Jerusalem council is certainly one of these moments. However, we see another reason for mention of the Holy Spirit. When we examine at the main content of the decree we notice that only the practical elements of James' speech became part of the decree. It seems that nothing from Peter's speech was included in the text of the decree, but in fact the main argument in Peter's speech was the gift of the Holy Spirit for the Gentiles, which was proof that God cleansed their hearts and made them equal to the Jews (Ac 15,8–9). The phrase "*the Holy Spirit and we*" in Ac 15,28 refers to this fundamental experience of Peter (Ac 10,44–48), which forced the apostles to think in a new direction.⁴²⁷ This is probably where the thought emerged of minimalizing the obligation of the Law towards Gentile Christians to the only necessary regulations, which would enable peaceful coexistence between two different ethnic groups within the one Christian movement.

The *argumentatio* contains four regulations of the Law, which Gentile Christians should obey in their daily lives (v. 29a). All the obligations concern problem of table sharing, which were rooted in the Jewish tradition of cleanliness and uncleanness, and prevented Jewish Christians from sharing table or praying meeting with Gentile Christians who did not obey this particular part of the Law.⁴²⁸ It puts the decree on a very practical level. In fact the obligations that the decree required from Gentile Christians were nothing more than already existing laws concerning uncleanness, which were obligatory for Jews and for Gentiles living among the Jews (Lev 17,8.10–15).⁴²⁹ Essentially nothing new was introduced. The decree of the council adapted the Law concerning cleaners that was binding in a strictly Jewish context to the relation between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians within the one Christian community.⁴³⁰

The *peroratio* (Ac 15,29b) contains a logical and reasonable obligation that, if followed, would bring about good results. In general, Gentile Christians are not obliged to obey the Law in order to be saved (v. 28). However, if Gentile

427 M.A. Seifrid, "Jesus and the Law in Acts," *JSNT* 30 (1987): 41–44. Although in Ac 15,8 and Ac 11,17 the Holy Spirit is not the main agent (both texts take conclusive character), however in Ac 10,44–47 and Ac 11,15–16 He is presented as the main agent (both texts take narrative character). Since the decree is the final conclusion concerning the problem of Gentile Christians, the event at the house of Cornelius is the source of many events, which in the end led to this conclusion.

428 This part of the decree is identical with part of James' speech (Ac 15,20).

429 The obligations are identical with these presented in James' speech (Ac 15,20), however they are presented in a different order (the same as in Lev 17–18). The analysis of all obligations has been provided at point 3.2.B2 in Chapter 2.

430 C. Blomberg, "The Law in Luke-Acts," *JSNT* 22 (1984): 53–80.

Christians want to live and to pray together with Jewish Christians, they have to recognise that for Jewish Christian the matters concerning cleanness and uncleanness are crucial in their understanding of their self-identity as Jews. This requires that Gentile Christians freely accept and obey this obligation of the Law in order to be able to create one Christian community in which Jewish Christians could be at ease in their association with Gentile Christians. The term διατηρέω—to keep free of used in the last sentence of the decree “avoid these, and you will do what is right” appears in the texts of the LXX in reference to the covenant and the commandments (Gen 17,10, Num 18,7, Deut 7,8, Sir 1,25), which gave to the obligations an obligatory status.⁴³¹

C.3 *The Function of the Speech*

The speech is the last of three speeches concerning the Jerusalem council, and it takes a form of an official decree.⁴³² There is a close relationship between these three speeches, in which the first two speeches (Ac 15,7–12, 13–21) build the ground for the decision presented in the third speech, which takes a conclusive function (Ac 15,22–29). The problem that led to the council was presented by Luke in Ac 15,1–2, and naturally we would expect to find the answer to this problem in the decree, but in fact no direct answer is given. Instead of the answer that circumcision is not necessary for Gentile Christians to be saved, in the decree we find that the burden of the Law will not be imposed on Gentile Christians (v. 28), with the exception of a few necessary obligations, to which obedience is strongly required (v. 29). While the problem that led to the council was of a doctrinal character, the decree has a practical character.⁴³³ However, the decree indirectly gives a negative answer (v. 28) to the problem concerning the necessity of imposing the Law upon Gentile Christians. The ground for this statement was prepared in the Peter's speech (Ac 15,8–9). However, in order to avoid a problem of association between Jewish Christians, who are obeying the Law, and Gentile Christians, who are not obliged to obey the Law, four rules from the Law are imposed on Gentile Christians, with the obligation that they obey them (Ac 15,29). If the Gentiles will obey the rules concerning cleanness, which had been imposed from of old on the Jews and Gentiles living among Jews, Jewish Christians will consider them to be clean and will associate with them (Ac 15,29b). Although it is not explicitly said, however the logical result will be that, if Gentile Christians did not obey the four regulations, their association with Jewish Christians would be impossible. The

431 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 277–278.

432 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2279–2292.

433 H. Perrot, “Les décisions de l’assemblée de Jérusalem,” *RScRel* 69 (1981): 195–208.

decree seems to express a consensus reached by both sides making possible the acceptance of Gentile Christians among the community in Judea and Syria that consisted of a majority of Jewish Christians.⁴³⁴

The decree, as the part of the narrative concerning the Jerusalem council, is the last account referring to the mission activities of the Jerusalem community in Judea and Samaria.⁴³⁵ In fact, this marks the end of the Acts of the Apostles referring to Jerusalem church.⁴³⁶ From Ac 15,36 the Acts of the Apostles becomes the Acts of Paul, where the Jerusalem community appears but as the narrative context for the main agent, Paul. This gives the decree a special function in the whole narrative concerning the mission in Judea and Samaria (Ac 8,4–15,35). In our opinion, the decree has no direct connection with the next narratives concerning Paul's mission journey. The decree strictly refers to the mission of Jerusalem community in Judea and Samaria (v. 23), and it should be recognised as the solution to the particular problem that arose in this mission territory in regard to the way in which Jewish and Gentile Christians might associate.⁴³⁷ The decree shows the result of an authoritative attempt to solve tensions within the Christian community. The solution is a compromise, where on the one hand Jewish Christians must acknowledge that it is will of God to accept Gentile Christians on terms different than the Law (compromise concerning doctrinal matter), and on the other hand Gentile Christians must accept that some important for Jews obligations of the Law are necessary to be respected and practiced also by them (compromise concerning practical matters). The decree takes function of a model example for the overcoming the ethnic and cultural differences in order to create a single community. It is important to note that the consensus was created by the mother church, and not by local community, what since it is last example of involvement in mission of Jerusalem church (as recorded by Luke), must be taken as the fundamental act that creates obligatory standards concerning the way forward for the coexistence of Gentiles and Jews within the Christian community.

434 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 563.

435 In our opinion, the narrative concerning the Jerusalem council and the narrative concerning the first mission journey are part of the narrative concerning the mission of Jerusalem community in Judea and Samaria Ac 8,4–15,35.

436 With exception to Ac 21,17–26.

437 This solution, though limited here to a particular region, became the model of obligation for churches in other regions, and it influenced church tradition. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 346–347.

3.3 *Paul's Time in Custody*

The largest part of the Acts of the Apostles that refers to Saul/Paul puts particular focus on his imprisonment narrated by Luke in Ac 21,27–28,31. Also in this part of Acts the speeches take on a special function, which is not strictly narrative in character (similar to other speeches in the narrative concerning the activities of the Jerusalem communities), but also differs from function of the speeches in Ac 1,1–21,16.⁴³⁸ The speeches in the narrative concerning Paul's imprisonment, we have arranged according to a socio-geographical key into the five sections: (1) Jerusalem; (2) Caesarea (Felix); (3) Caesarea (Festus); (4) voyage to Rome; (5) in Rome. The narrative as well as the speeches shows logical continuity between each section.

3.3.1 Jerusalem

After ending his third mission journey, Paul went back to Jerusalem (Ac 21,17–26), where very soon he was arrested (Ac 21,27–40). Paul's custody started in Jerusalem and according to Luke's narration it ended in Rome. The first set of speeches of this period is placed in Jerusalem and it contains: Paul's speech to the crowd; Paul's speech before the Sanhedrin; and the letter of Lysias.

A *The Speech of Paul to the Crowd Outside the Temple (Ac 22, 1–21)*

On the seventh day of his purification ritual Paul went to the Temple in Jerusalem to announce accomplishing of the ritual and to offer the sacrifices for four brothers in temporary Nazarite vows (Ac 21,23–24,26–27).⁴³⁹ In the Temple he was recognised by Jews from Asia who immediately rose in opposition, and the uproar spread through the whole city (Ac 21,28–30). Fortunately for Paul, the Roman soldiers, who interpreted the commotion as the beginning of a revolt, intervened and saved his life (Ac 21,31–36). Though under the arrest, Paul received permission to speak to the crowd (Ac 21,37–40). This speech is the first in the narrative concerning Paul imprisonment (Ac 21,27–28,31), and because of its apologetic character it contains a brief account of Paul's life that includes some information (Ac 22,17–21), which cannot be found elsewhere in the New Testament.⁴⁴⁰ This prompts some question concerning the real function of the speech.

438 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 660–661.

439 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 586–588.

440 Concerning Paul's defensive speeches see J. Neyrey, "The Forensic Defense Speech and Paul's Trial Speeches in Acts 22–26: Form and Function," in *Luke-Acts: New Perspectives from the Society of Biblical Literature Seminar*, ed. C.H. Talbert (New York: Crossroad,

The text of Ac 22, 1–21

¹ Brothers and fathers, listen to the defence which I am about to make before you. ² When they heard that he was speaking to them in Hebrew, they were still more quiet; and Paul went on: ³ I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, but I was brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and educated in accordance with the strict system of our ancestral Law, being zealous for God as all of you who are here today. ⁴ I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, ⁵ as the high priest himself and all the council of elders can testify. From them I received letters to brethren, and I went to Damascus to bring those whom I might find there prisoners to Jerusalem for punishment. ⁶ While I was still on my way, just as I was getting close to Damascus, about midday, a great light from heaven suddenly shone about me. ⁷ I fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to me: Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? ⁸ I replied: Who are you, Lord? Then he said to me: I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting. ⁹ Those how were with me saw the light, but did not hear the voice speaking to me. ¹⁰ Then I said: What am I to do, Lord? The Lord said to me: Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that you have been appointed to do. ¹¹ Since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, those who were with me held me by the hand, until I reached Damascus. ¹² The certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well-spoken of by all the Jewish inhabitants, ¹³ came to see me, and standing close to me, he said: Saul, my brother, receive your sight. And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. ¹⁴ Then he said: The God of our ancestors has appointed you to learn his will, and to see the righteous one, and to hear words from his lips, ¹⁵ for you will be a witness for him to all men of what you have just seen and heard. ¹⁶ And now why do you wait any longer, get up and be baptized, wash away your sins by invoke his name. ¹⁷ After my return to Jerusalem, while I was praying one day in the Temple, I fell into a trance, ¹⁸ and saw him saying to me: make haste and leave Jerusalem at once, because they will not accept your testimony about me. ¹⁹ I answered: Lord, they know that in every synagogue I used to imprison and scourge those who believed in you; ²⁰ and, when the blood of your martyr, Stephen, was being shed, I was myself standing by, approving and keeping the coats of those who killed him. ²¹ But he said to me: go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.

1984), 210–224; F. Veltman, “The Defense Speeches of Paul in Acts,” in *Perspectives on Luke-Acts*, ed. C.H. Talbert (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1978), 253–256.

A.1 The Structural Analysis of the Speech

The speech is a long, but incomplete apology, which contains an account of Paul's life from his birth until Jesus' revelation to him in the Temple.⁴⁴¹ The speech consists of an *exordium* (v. 1) and a *narratio* (vv. 3–21). There are no further parts of the rhetorical structure in this speech because it was interrupted and left unfinished.⁴⁴² The *exordium* covers two points, the first one strictly Jewish in content (the speaker and hearers belong to the same ethnic and religious group), and the second is apologetic (Paul's apology to his countrymen). The *narratio* consists of four parts referring to different periods of Paul's life, which are arranged in both a chronological and a logical way.⁴⁴³ The first part (Ac 22,3–5) refers to the period from his birth in Tarsus to his activities in Jerusalem as persecutor of Jesus' followers (Ac 21,3–5). The information contained in this part of the speech agrees with information from Ac 8,1–3, 9,1–2, Gal 1,13, Phil 3,5–6. The second part (Ac 22,6–11) refers to the event at Damascus. The information in this part, although presented in a slightly different order, agrees with Luke's account in Ac 9,3–9. The third part (Ac 22,12–16) refers to the relationship between Paul and Ananias, the man who most probably baptised Paul. This part refers to the events presented by Luke in Ac 9,10–19 in a longer form. This suggests that Ac 22,12–16 should be understood as being a summary of Ac 9,10–19, despite some re-arranging of the details.⁴⁴⁴ The fourth part (Ac 22,17–21) contains only one piece of information, which is found also in Ac 9,15, although the contexts are different. In fact this part of the speech contains information that cannot be found in other writings of Paul or Luke, and in the opinion of some scholars it is even in contradiction to Luke's account in Ac 9,10–19.⁴⁴⁵

A.2 The Meaning of the Speech

Paul addresses the crowd of Jews who had tried to kill him, in Aramaic, a fact that seems to come as a great surprise to them (Ac 22,2).⁴⁴⁶ He addresses his

441 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 393.

442 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 666–668.

443 Concerning criticism of attempts to analyse the speech according to Greek rhetorical standards, see Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 665–668.

444 Some information from Ac 9,10–19 is not included in Ac 22,12–16, or is found in the fourth part of the Paul's speech in Jerusalem in a very different context. Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 224.

445 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 187.

446 Luke in Ac 21,40 already indicates that Paul silenced the crowd and then he spoke to them in Aramaic. In this case, Ac 22,2 may be understood as a simple repetition of Ac 21,40, or as indicating the degree of the crowd's interest. In Ac 22,2 the crowd become silent because

opponents as “my brothers, my fathers”—indicating his union with the opponents (Ac 22,1).⁴⁴⁷ It is followed by the words: ἀκούσατέ μου τῆς πρὸς ὑμᾶς νυνὶ ἀπολογίας—*listen to what I have to say to you in my defence*. This indicates that Paul’s speech is given in order to defend himself against an accusation that is not directly indicated, but understandable from the context, namely, that Paul had renounced Judaism (Ac 21,28).

The first part of the speech (Ac 22,3–5) is a short *résumé* of his life until the event at Damascus. Paul was a Jew of the Diaspora, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but raised in Jerusalem and educated in the Law under the direction of the famous Pharisaic teacher Gamaliel (Ac 22,3).⁴⁴⁸ His education in the Law is described using the term ἀκριβεία—*exact*, which left no ground for doubting Paul’s knowledge of the Law.⁴⁴⁹ It led him to a zeal attitude for God that was no less than that of the crowd he is now addressing.⁴⁵⁰ These convictions took the shape of Paul’s active participation in persecution of Jewish Christians,⁴⁵¹ in way similar to the present action of the crowd towards Paul (v. 4). The strong conviction that the messianic movement was dangerous to Judaism (v. 3) drove Paul to put an end to this movement not only in Jerusalem but in the wider

they heard Paul speaking in Aramaic, which suggests this second possibility. By speaking in Aramaic Paul got the attention and sympathy of the Jews. R.J. Cassidy, *Society and Politics in the Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Orbis, 1987), 96–144; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 387.

447 Note the similarity of the addressees and the contexts in Ac 7,2 (the speech of Stephen) and Ac 22,1. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3204.

448 The statement that Paul was raised in Jerusalem does not oppose to Gal 1,22, because it concerns a different period of Paul’s life and belongs in a different context. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 387–388. Note the similar triptych biographical statement concerning Moses in Stephen’s speech (Ac 7,20–22). Concerning Gamaliel as the teacher of Paul, see Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3215–3221.

449 Since Paul is giving his apology, such elements of his biography being a Jew, growing up in Jerusalem, studying under a famous teacher, serves as an *encomium* showing Paul’s Jewish credentials. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 899–901.

450 This statement on the one hand serves as the *captatio benevolentiae* where Paul praises his hearers for their zeal, which in this particular context takes the shape of persecuting Paul, who was recognised as an opponent of God, and on the other hand serves as a preparation for the presentation of Paul’s form of zeal for God, which took the form of persecution of Christians, recognised as opponents of God. In fact, this statement can be understood in the context of Ac 21,7–11 as a hidden insinuation of the crowd’s mistaken action towards Paul. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 596–597.

451 The expression τῇν ὁδὸν—*this way*—refers Jews believing in Jesus as the Messiah. See Ac 9,2, 19,9.23. Concerning Paul’s zeal, which led him to persecute Messianic Jews, Paul writes in his letters: 1 Cor 15,9, Gal 1,13–14, Phil 3,6. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 388.

Jewish world (v. 5).⁴⁵² The witnesses to Paul's words are the high priest and the elders, who encouraged him prerogative to continue his persecution even in Damascus.⁴⁵³ They granted him letters of reference for the Jews in Diaspora, probably giving Paul authority to search for followers of Jesus who may have succeeded in fleeing from Jerusalem to Damascus in Syria (v. 5). This information serves as the strongest proof of his zeal for God in this opening section of his apology.

The second part of the speech (Ac 22,6–11) refers to the revelation of Jesus to Saul on the road to Damascus.⁴⁵⁴ Verse 6 provides three items of information: the place (*near Damascus*), the time (*in the middle of the day*) and the means of revelation (*a bright light from heaven suddenly shone round me*). The revelation took place near Damascus in Syria, and was therefore outside Judea in a foreign land. It happened at midday, thus excluding the possibility that it was only a dream.⁴⁵⁵ The light, which surrounded Saul, was not the daylight, but it was a sign of revelation clearly visible also to his companions, and was so intense that it made him blind (Ac 22,9,11).⁴⁵⁶ Saul (v. 7) fell to the ground in front of the light and he heard a voice speaking to him "*Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me*". In this way the subject of the revelation, who in v. 8 identifies himself as Jesus of Nazareth, considers Saul's persecution of Jesus' believers to be a persecution of Him.⁴⁵⁷ This verse 8 is the beginning of the dialogue between Saul and Jesus (Ac 22,8,10) during which the whole process leading to Saul's

452 See summary statement in Ac 9,1 "breathing threats and murder".

453 There are small differences between the accounts in Ac 22,5 and Ac 9,2. See Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 187. The main purpose of this information is to underline the credibility of Paul's words, which can be verified by eminent people among the Jews.

454 The account is notably brief and schematic, what may be caused by fact that reader already knows the whole story (Ac 9,1–17), so allowing the writer to retell the story with some differences in emphasis of elements, as well as in differences concerning the new context and the new purpose. M.E. Rosenblatt, "Recurring Narration as a Lukan Literary Convention in Acts: Paul's Jerusalem Speech in Acts 22:1–22," in *New Views on Luke and Acts*, ed. E. Richard (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990), 94–105.

455 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 705. The information concerning the time is missing in Ac 9,3.

456 There are also minor differences between Ac 22,6 and Ac 9,2. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 388. The bright light blinding people is in Lukan narration part of the revelation of Jesus' glory (Ac 22,6–11, 26,13) and in other writings it refers to the revelation of angels (Mt 28,2–3, Rev 10,1). Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3229.

457 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 671. Differently in Ac 9,5 and Ac 26,14 where the subject of revelation presents himself as "Jesus" (the common Jewish name), in Ac 22,8 the subject presents himself as "Jesus of Nazareth". Because of that, the Jewish hearers can precisely identify the subject.

conversion took place. It starts with Saul's question concerning the identity of the voice, to which he received probably a rather unexpected answer that it was Jesus of Nazareth who appeared to him.⁴⁵⁸ Jesus' answer includes also an indication of real antagonism on the part of Saul towards Jesus, because action against Jesus' believers (the church) means to act against Jesus himself, who appeared to Saul as the living one.⁴⁵⁹ There is further explanation given in verse 9, interrupting the dialogue.⁴⁶⁰ The explanation refers to the fact that Saul's companions saw the sign of the revelation but they did not participate in the revelation itself.⁴⁶¹ They saw Saul speaking, but they did know with whom he was conversing. It makes the revelation strictly addressed to Saul. Verse 10 is the second part of the dialogue between Jesus and Saul, in which it is indicated that Saul has considered Jesus as the Lord whom he is going to serve. Verse 10 indicates the moment when Saul considers himself as a believer in Jesus, the Messiah raised by God, whom he chooses as his Lord.⁴⁶² The reason for this change is the divine revelation, and not his own personal deliberation.⁴⁶³ The answer to Saul's question concerning his life after this revelation contains the very important assertion that all this is a part of God's plan for Saul, which has been decided and soon it will be explained to him in Damascus.⁴⁶⁴ The final

458 Saul certainly at that moment does not yet believe in Jesus' resurrection.

459 Probably Luke includes here Paul's teaching concerning an understanding of the Christian Church as the body of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 12,12–31). Verses 7–8 show some similarities with the revelation to Moses on Mount Sinai. In both cases there are identical elements: unnatural event, voice, question concerning the name, answer to the question and instructions. It is possible that Luke consciously intended these similarities in order to indicate God as the main agent, who chooses people for particular tasks.

460 In our opinion, verse 9 serves as a border between two parts of the dialogue Jesus-Saul, where the first part (Ac 22,6–8) provides arguments showing the wrongness of Saul's thoughts concerning Jesus and His followers. The second part of the dialogue (Ac 22,10) indicates Saul subordination to the truth he has discovered.

461 According to Ac 9,7 the companions of Paul heard the voice but they saw nothing. This seems to differ from Ac 22,9, but in both cases the companions are passive observers of the event. Concerning the differences between Ac 22,9 and Ac 9,7, see Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3230–2231.

462 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 903.

463 This is a common Luke's pattern in narrations concerning the life and activities of Saul/Paul.

464 Verse 10 says that "everything" will be revealed to Saul in Damascus, which in the context of the following narration Ac 22,12–16 seems not to happen, since in Damascus it was revealed to him only those things related to his baptism (Ac 9,17–19, 22,12–16), but God's main purpose in Saul conversion will be revealed to him in another revelation, which will take place in Jerusalem (Ac 22,17–21). This gives the term "everything" some limitation,

verse 11 shows again that the revelation was of divine origin, and it was a real event, which resulted in a temporary physical illness for Saul.⁴⁶⁵

The third section of the speech (Ac 22,12–16) refers to Saul's stay in Damascus after his conversion.⁴⁶⁶ Verse 12 indicates that the first man who by the will of Jesus approached Saul, was Ananias the Jew, whose reputation among the Jews in Damascus was widely recognised.⁴⁶⁷ Verse 13 shows that it was Ananias, who cured Paul's temporary blindness by the power of his word.⁴⁶⁸ Ananias addressed Saul as "brother", which usually means a fellow Jew, and the crowd probably understood it in this way. Verse 14 includes other expressions usually found in Jewish contexts and they concern the fate of Saul. The expression "the God of our ancestors" indicates that Saul had been chosen by God long before the event at Damascus took place. It is will of the God of Israel that Saul meet "the Righteous One" literally in order to see and to hear Him.⁴⁶⁹ Indirectly, Lukan Paul says that by God's work, Saul, the persecutor of the believers and Jesus, met Jesus in order to become His witness to all people (v.15).⁴⁷⁰

which gives it a meaning not of "everything" that will concern his life, but a meaning of "all things which are necessary to be known by him" on this particular step. What the reader of Acts knows through Luke's narration in Ac 9,10–16, the hearers of Paul's speech will hear in a part of his speech concerning the revelation in the Jerusalem Temple.

- 465 Johnson is of the opinion that the phrase δόξης τοῦ φωτός should be translated literally as "glory of the light" because of "thematic association throughout the work between light and the glory of God" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 389). However, the context and effect of the revelation are strictly physical, which makes the translation of δόξης τοῦ φωτός as "brightness of the light" more appropriate.
- 466 The word "conversion" is used in sense of changing from being a non-disciple of Jesus into disciple of Jesus, and it is not used in the sense of changing religion.
- 467 In Ac 9,10 Ananias is presented as "a disciple"—a Jew believing in Jesus—but here (Ac 22,12) he is presented as "a devout follower of the Law". The reason for the change is the context of Paul's defensive speech. By describing Ananias as the devout follower of the Law, Paul indirectly says to the crowd that the followers of Jesus are also followers of the Law. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 389.
- 468 Concerning the double meaning of ἀναβλέπω (*look up*) in Ac 22,13 see Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 672. The performance of a miracle by Ananias may also be seen as witness to his piety.
- 469 Ananias directly speaks to Saul about Jesus as "the Righteous One", describes Jesus as the one who fulfilled the will of God (Ac 3,14, 7,52), which seems to be unnecessary, since Saul has subordinated himself to the Lord and recognised Jesus as the Messiah. It is possible that with this information the Lukan Ananias indirectly addresses the hearers of Paul's speech. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 706–707.
- 470 The bases for his witness are the three elements revealed to Saul, which are the will of God, meeting God's Messiah, learning from the Messiah. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*,

Verse 15 provides this important information concerning Saul's fate that was decided by God. Proclaiming the experience of meeting the risen Jesus and the knowledge learned during the revelation, become the purpose of Saul's life. He will proclaim this to all people, which indirectly indicates that it is not only intended for those in a covenant with the one God, but it is not yet (until verse 21) directly mentioned due to the rhetorical purpose of the speech. Verse 16 contains further important information concerning the consequences of the revelation. Ananias urged Saul to receive baptism in Jesus' name in order to wash away his sins.⁴⁷¹ The expression τί μέλλεις—*why do you delay?*—may suggest some kind of doubt on the part of Saul, which in the context of the speech would work in favour of Paul.⁴⁷² Ananias urges Saul to wake up, be baptised (to dip repeatedly in water) in order to wash away his sins and finally to call on Jesus' name, which can be seen simply as a three part sequence describing the early Christian baptism ritual.⁴⁷³

The last section of the speech (Ac 22,17–21) refers to the event concerning Saul, which occurred in the Temple, and this seems to take on a specific purpose in Luke's construction of the speech. The event mentioned here is absent from other accounts of Saul/Paul's life in the New Testament. After the account concerning the event on the road to Damascus and his association with Ananias in Damascus, Saul's speech jumped directly to the events in the

904–905. These three elements of the Lukan Ananias' explanation correlate well with Paul's own statements concerning the truth of the Gospel proclaimed by him (Gal 1,11–12).

471 Concerning the problem of Paul's baptism (was he baptised by Ananias or did he baptise himself?) see Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 417–418; Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3234–3235; Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 672. Because of use of the passive voice in Ac 9,18 (καὶ ἀναστὰς ἐβαπτίσθη), and because of the use of the middle voice in Ac 22,16 (Ἀναστὰς βάπτισαι καὶ ἀπόλουσαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας σου) in reference to baptism (which is a possible translation) and to the forgiveness of sins (which is an impossible translation), we opt for the interpretation that Paul was baptised by Ananias.

472 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 390. Even after the revelation, Saul as the Jew and the Pharisee, could have some dilemmas concerning joining the new sect, which he had previously opposed. However, Conzelmann supposes that the expression can be a "cultic formula used within initiation rites," and it does not imply Paul's doubts (*Acts of the Apostles*, 187). In our opinion, the whole argumentation of Ananias, which starts with God's election of Saul in Ac 22,14 (the past event), proceeding with the future destination of Saul in Ac 22,15 (future event) leads to its main aim, which is the baptism of Saul in Ac 22,16 (present event).

473 Again because of the strictly Jewish context of the speech, the name of Jesus is not explicitly mentioned. Use of the imperative aorist βάπτισαι καὶ ἀπόλουσαι supports the view that baptism is described here.

Jerusalem Temple.⁴⁷⁴ Verse 17 informs us that during his stay in Jerusalem, Saul, while praying in the Temple, had a vision (or fell into the trance). This information seems to be a direct answer to the part of the accusation against Saul presented in Ac 21,28. After Saul became a Christian (a believer of Jesus) he continued (as a Jew) to pray in the Temple. This action shows Saul's devotion and piety in relation to the Temple, which became the place of the revelation to him that can be interpreted differently depending on hearers and readers background.⁴⁷⁵ Because Luke in verse 18 uses the first person singular pronoun (ἐμοῦ) and third person singular (αὐτόν), as well as in verse 21 a verb (εἶπεν) in third person singular, the subject of revelation can be God (the probable understanding of the hearers) or can be Jesus (the probable understanding of the readers).⁴⁷⁶ Verse 18 offers details concerning the first order of Jesus given to Saul in this vision. Jesus ordered him to leave Jerusalem immediately because Saul's attempt to share his experience with the inhabitants of Jerusalem will be fruitless. It seems to be a kind of prophetic statement, however, more likely it can be a conclusive statement presented in the form of the divine will, an evaluation of the Saul/Paul experiences presented by Luke in Ac 9,28–30.⁴⁷⁷

Between the first order and the second order, Luke placed the account (Ac 22,19–20) concerning Saul's arguing with the Lord,⁴⁷⁸ that the inhabitants of Jerusalem will accept his testimony due to their knowledge of Saul's background as a zealous Jew, who persecuted the Jews believing in Jesus and participated in the stoning of Stephen, when he sacrificed himself in defence of his convictions (Ac 7,1–8,1).⁴⁷⁹ Objection to God's order is an often used device to affirm the rightness of the speaker (Ac 10,13–16), and most probably it is

474 In Ac 22,17–21, Luke says nothing about Paul's three-year stay in Damascus (Ac 9,19–25). Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 390.

475 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 673–674.

476 We are on the opinion that Saul spoke about Jesus but the hearers thought about God, because if they thought differently their opposition would take place at this moment in Saul's speech, and not at the moment of mentioning the mission to Gentiles.

477 Here Paul presents his understanding of the experience he had during his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion, which is now shaped into a kind of theological interpretation of the real happening. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 390.

478 Again, the term Lord in Ac 22,19 can be understood differently by the speaker (referring to Jesus) and the hearers (referring to God). Fitzmyer, "κύριος," in *EDNT*, vol. 2, 328–331. However, the term in verse 21 takes the strict meaning of Jesus, due to the exposition of Jesus as the subject of revelation in the Temple in Ac 22,19–20.

479 Using expressions *those who believed in you* (v. 19) and *while the blood of your witness Stephen was shed* (v. 20), Paul for the first time in this section (Ac 22,17–21) directly points to Jesus as the subject of the revelation in the Temple, in a way that it cannot be misun-

used here for this purpose. Paul presents himself as one who stands for the Jews, even if the will of his Lord is different. He uses his own example as an argument that conversion of the inhabitants of Jerusalem is possible, however the will of Jesus stayed unchanged (v. 21). From the rhetorical viewpoint, Paul's defence of his opponents should earn him acceptance from their side,⁴⁸⁰ however this does not seem to bring an expected effect, since the last highly provocative statement in Ac 22,21 brought the speech to a sudden end.

Verse 21 contains the second part of Jesus' order to Saul, which reveals the will of the Lord that Saul will work among Gentiles proclaiming His Gospel.⁴⁸¹ This time the meaning of the message is easily recognised not only by the readers of the Acts, but also by the hearers of Paul's speech. This interpretation is supported by the fact that at this stage, according to Luke's account, the speech of Paul is interrupted by his hearers (Ac 22,22).⁴⁸² From Paul's viewpoint (also the readers), placing in the Temple the vision of Jesus and His order to proclaim the Gospel to Gentiles clearly points to the divine origin of his mission to Gentiles, and indirectly answer to the accusation presented in second part of Ac 21,28. However, from the crowd's viewpoint, Paul speaks blasphemy in declaring that Jesus revealed himself in the Temple ordering his servant to favour Gentiles before Jews (the inhabitants of Jerusalem).⁴⁸³

A.3 The Function of the Speech

The speech is the first of three thematic speeches (Ac 22,1–21, 23,1.6.26–30) concerning Paul's imprisonment in Jerusalem (Ac 21,27–23,35). For this particular reason Luke placed the speech in the narrative concerning the Jews' attempt to kill Paul in Jerusalem (Ac 21,31). However, Paul's life was saved by Roman soldiers, who allowed him to make his apologetic speech (Ac 21,39–40). The speech consists of four parts (22,1–5, 22,6–11, 22,12–16, 22,17–21), each of which is a separate unity with a specific function, and at the same time all the sections combine to form a progressive apology that takes a special function in the narrative concerning Paul's imprisonment.

derstood by his hearers, since both events regard the believers of Jesus (Jewish Christian) and not the believers in God (Jews).

480 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 188.

481 This order is with accordance to Ac 9,15.

482 Garroway rightly points to the fact that interruptions of the speeches are deliberate literary devices frequently used by Luke. J.D. Garroway, "Apostolic Irresistibility' and the Interrupted Speeches in Acts," *CBQ* 74 (2012): 739.

483 In fact, verse 18 contains a lack of hope concerning conversion of Jews living in Jerusalem. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 188; Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3228.

The function of the first part of the speech is to present Paul as a religious, zealous and faithful Jew, who in order to protect the true teaching of Judaism decided to persecute the new (Jewish) sect called Christian.

The function of the second part of the speech is to indicate the event, which changed the direction of Paul's life. The revelation of Jesus subdues Paul's antagonism and led him to accept Jesus as the Lord whom he decided to serve (Ac 22,10).

The function of the third part of the speech is to inform the hearers that the former persecutor of the movement has become a member of the messianic movement. The one who assisted Paul in joining the Christian movement was Ananias, a Jew of good standing and reputation.

The function of the fourth part of the speech is to indicate clearly that Paul's mission to Gentiles was the divine plan. Jesus, whom Paul accepted as his Lord, gave the order to Paul in the Temple. From the very beginning the aim of this plan was to proclaim the Gospel to Gentiles. Paul mission to Gentiles was not his own choice, but it was a consequence of his obedience to the Lord Jesus. The four parts of this apologetic speech present in schematic but comprehensive manner the process and reason behind Paul's mission to Gentiles. The process refers to his move from being a zealous Jew to becoming a Jew believing in Jesus and being sent to work among Gentiles. The reason refers to the fact that it was not Paul's will, but the order comes from Jesus, the Lord to whom Paul subordinated himself.

Suspicion concerning the person of Paul, raised among Diaspora Jews (Ac 21,27), spread among Jews in Jerusalem, and led to disturbance, unrest in the city, which was noted by the Roman military. Because of that, Paul was arrested by Romans on suspicion of political agitation, which proved as being wrong (Ac 21,37–38). In these circumstances Paul's Roman citizenship was revealed for identification purpose, and from then on Paul became subject to the Roman judicial system. All this is carefully crafted by Luke as socio-political background, which serves as the basis for whole narration concerning Paul's imprisonment. At the beginning of the narrative, Luke places the speech of Paul, which shows the real reason for his imprisonment, namely his rejection by his fellow countryman. The main function of the speech is to indicate the reason for Paul's rejection by the Jews in Jerusalem. The most controversial statement in Paul's speech concerns his claim that the mission to Gentiles, which he was committed to, was the will of the resurrected Jesus, who was revealed to him in the Jerusalem Temple.⁴⁸⁴ This claim was recognised by the Jews in Jerusalem as proof confirming the accusation brought against Paul by

484 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 394.

Jews from the Diaspora (Ac 21,28). The fact that the speech is interrupted at the point concerning the mission to Gentiles, and not at the point where Paul spoke of the vision of Jesus in the Temple (Ac 22,18), shows Luke's purpose for this speech (within the group of speeches concerning Paul's imprisonment), which is to indicate that the Jews in Jerusalem were not prepared to accept the mission to Gentiles as being of divine origin.⁴⁸⁵ For this reason, they rejected the man who devoted his life to this mission.

B *The Speech of Paul before the Sanhedrin (Ac 23, 1. 6)*

From a rhetorical point of view it may seem hard to recognise just these two verses as a speech, however it is easy to recognise that it was intended by Paul to be full length speech containing judicial rhetoric, which however in accord with Luke's narrative purpose was reduced to a fragment, just enough to indicate main idea of the speaker.⁴⁸⁶ The not accidental construction of this fragmentary speech serves to reveal to the readers of Acts the real position of Paul, in which he found himself after being arrested. The following analysis helps recognise his legal position, and so determine the function of the speech.

The text of Ac 23, 1. 6

¹ Brethren, for my part, I have always lived my life before God, with a clear conscience, up to this very day.

⁶ Brethren, I am a Pharisee and a son of Pharisees. I am on my trial concerning the hope and the resurrection of the death.

B.1 The Structural Analysis of the Speech

The speech is given to the members of the Sanhedrin during Paul's interrogation, which was forced by the Romans (Ac 22,30).⁴⁸⁷ The manner in which Paul starts the speech suggests that Paul intended it as an apologetic speech, the

485 The question concerning the relation between Gentiles and Jews (Ac 22,21 and Ac 21,28) is in fact the only connection between the speech (Ac 22,1–21) and the accusation (Ac 21,28). The accusation contains problems referring to the Law, the Temple and the nation, which are not mentioned in the speech.

486 Soards recognised Ac 23,1–6 as the speech, which includes v. 1b, v. 3, v. 5 and v. 6b (*The Speeches in Acts*, 114–115). However, in our opinion, verse 3 and verse 5 are part of dialogue between Paul and the members of the Sanhedrin, and not the part of the speech. See also: P. Schubert, "The Final Cycle of Speeches in the Book of Acts," *JBL* 87 (1968): 1–16.

487 Witherington III thinks that it was not a trial but an interrogation forced by Romans in order to get information concerning a possible violation of Roman law. However, according to Luke, Paul is speaking in Ac 23,3.6 about judgment. In v. 6 *κρίνομαι*—*I am judged* is in the indicative present passive form (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 684–686).

purpose of which is to present himself as a faithful Jew (Ac 23,1). However, the speech did not move forward since the High Priest interrupted it, ordering that Paul be beaten (Ac 23,2).⁴⁸⁸ In return, Paul cursed the High Priest (Ac 23,3).⁴⁸⁹ This was an offence against the Law, which was immediately indicated to Paul in harsh terms (Ac 23,4). Paul offered an apology confessing his ignorance concerning the person of the High Priest (Ac 23,5). Then, after surveying the situation, Paul starts the speech again, but this time directly pointing to the reason for his interrogation (Ac 23,6), referring to the controversial religious topic of the resurrection of the dead, the cause of a rift within the Sanhedrin (Ac 23,7–9) because of different opinions between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Sanhedrin, divided on this controversy, became incapable of continuing the interrogation, causing the Romans to end it, and take Paul back to the fortress (Ac 23,10).

Because the speech is incomplete no particular structure can be suggested, however some rhetorical elements can be found. Verse 1 starts with an *exordium*, which shows Paul's identification with the members of Sanhedrin (v. 1a).⁴⁹⁰ It is followed by *propositio* (v. 1b), where Paul presents himself as a righteous Jew.⁴⁹¹ The speech ends properly with a *peroratio* (v. 6b), where the main point of the speech is revealed.

B.2 The Meaning of the Speech

The tribune, who ordered that Paul be flogged and examined, found himself in a difficult position after he learned that the prisoner was a Roman citizen (Ac 22,26–29).⁴⁹² The aim of Paul's examination was to find out the reason for the crowd's charge against him (Ac 22,24). The tribune did not have clear knowledge concerning Paul's case, but he understood that the problem related to Jewish religious matters (Ac 22,30), which led him to set up the interrogation

488 Since from verse 2 until verse 6b follows the dialogue between Paul and the members of Sanhedrin, which gives answers to questions concerning the reason for such construction of the speech and the purpose of the construction. After Ac 22,3–21, Lukan Paul does not need to explain to the readers the meaning of the beginning of his speech (v. 1), what allows the narration to go directly to explain the reason (rejection of Paul's statement by the High Priest) for Paul's forward strategy (v. 6b), which included hints of a religious matter as the main point of controversy between him and some Jews.

489 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 192.

490 The *narratio* is omitted, since Paul's life was already presented in Ac 22,1–21.

491 There is no proper *probatio*, however, the dialogue (Ac 23,2–6a) may serve as proof of Paul's case (v. 1b)

492 The name of the tribune was Claudius Lysias, as indicated in Ac 23,26.

of Paul before the Sanhedrin.⁴⁹³ He could not examine Paul without a trial, and he could not request a trial without full understanding of the situation. In these circumstances he asked the Sanhedrin to interrogate Paul in the presence of Roman tribune in order to get knowledge, which would allow him to decide about character of Paul's possible offences. It seems that the interrogation was not strictly a trial, though Paul himself indicates it as such in v. 6, as intended to judge and pass sentence on him because of a violation of Jewish Law. It was an interrogation in order that the Romans get a clearer knowledge concerning the case.⁴⁹⁴

Verse 1 shows that the Lukan Paul, before starts the speech, carefully judged the situation and chose the right rhetorical strategy that will provide proof for the tribune that Paul's case refers strictly to a Jewish religious controversy. Paul addressed the Sanhedrin according to rhetorical standards with *exordium* ἀνδρες ἀδελφοί—*brothers*, which purposely indicates that he and the interrogators are on the same side.⁴⁹⁵ Immediately after, he added his self-presentation that contains a single statement that the whole life Paul was of faithful service to God, what is supposed to convince the Sanhedrin that he is a Jew living according to the Law.⁴⁹⁶ Verse 2 shows that the High Priest thought differently and did not find Paul's words to be agreeable, and expressed this by an order to slap Paul.⁴⁹⁷ Verse 3 shows Paul's reaction to this rather unexpected humiliation, which interrupted his speech. Paul cursed the High Priest accusing him

493 This information indirectly indicates that at this stage it was clear to the tribune that Paul is not guilty of any crime against Roman law. Concerning the procurator's rights to convene the Sanhedrin see: *Ant.* 20.202.

494 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3263–2264.

495 A similar exordium is used in *Ac* 4,8, 7,2. Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 226–227.

496 The statement contains the following descriptive elements: Paul lived according to God's will revealed through the Law (πεπολίτευμαι τῷ θεῷ); he lived with a clear conscience that shows his right conduct (συνειδήσει ἀγαθῇ); the clearness of conscience is perfect, which indicates lack of doubts (πάσῃ); this perfect conduct is constant, that means concerns past and present (ἄχρι ταύτης τῆς ἡμέρας). Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 924–925.

497 The High Priest is Ananias, who held the office in the years AD 47–59. He was appointed by Herod of Chalcis (*Ant.* 20.5.2) and during this time he was loyal servant of Rome (endorsing the information in *Ac* 22). During the Jewish-Roman war he was assassinated as a collaborator with Rome. This slender information concerning Ananias, may explain the reason for why he convened the Sanhedrin in order to please the tribune. Ananias' conduct shows disagreement or disrespect towards Paul, which by any standards in the Hellenistic world was recognised as a humiliating insult and punishable offense. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3268–2270.

of conduct against the Law,⁴⁹⁸ although he is supposed to judge Paul according to the Law. Since Paul's action is response to illegal offence, he should not be found guilty,⁴⁹⁹ however verse 4 indicates that Paul's reaction was immediately considered to be a violation of the Law prohibiting all from speaking wrong against the High Priest (Ex 22,27). In these circumstances Paul's statement made in v. 1 appeared to be untrue to the members of the Sanhedrin. To avoid this accusation, Paul in verse 5 offers his somehow irrelevant excuse, referring to his inability to recognise the High Priest, which must be recognised as rather odd, since on the one hand Ananias spent a long time in office and on other hand this argument would work against Paul's claim presented in verse 1.⁵⁰⁰ However, it is possible to take Paul's excuse as an ironical metaphor related to the improper conduct of the High Priest in ordering the punishment of Paul.⁵⁰¹ By using the quotation from the Ex 22,27 Paul presents himself as a Jew, who respects the Law contrary to the High Priest.⁵⁰² Overall, Paul became aware that the Sanhedrin was against him.

This time Paul's typical strategy in an apologetic speech did not turn in his favour. As a result he decided to use the weakness of the Sanhedrin, namely the differences on some religious matters that divided the Sadducees and the Pharisees, the two most influential groups.⁵⁰³ Verse 6 shows that Paul started the speech, as before, with the same word "brothers" but this time it is followed by a statement that clearly indicated which side Paul was on in the very controversial matter concerning the resurrection of the dead. Paul claimed to be

498 According to Josephus' accounts, Ananias as High Priest frequently acted unjustly, violated the Law, and was even involved in ambushing Samaritan pilgrimages (*Bell.* 2.243, 2.426–29, 2.441–442). Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 396.

499 H. Le Cornu and J. Shulam, "A Commentary on the Jewish Roots of Acts," vol. 1–2 (Jerusalem: Academon, 2003), 1244.

500 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 192.

501 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 397.

502 It is still possible that Paul did not meet Ananias earlier, and hence did not recognise him, if the interrogation took the form of a rather informal meeting, where the High Priest could not be indicated by his honourable position, however if the interrogation had been a formal trial conducted by the Sanhedrin, the High Priest would be known from his position in the gathering. I.H. Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 361–362.

503 Peterson rightly points out that this was "more than a tactical move for temporary advantage", but it was a way in which the Lukan Paul indicates the "theological" point that after its specification (resurrection of Jesus in Ac 26,6–8.22–23) became a "doctrinal" issue for the rejection of Paul's kerygma by Jews represented here by the authorities of the Temple (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 615–616).

one of the Pharisees who believe in resurrection, and that this was the reason for his trial.⁵⁰⁴ Although in this particular situation the question concerning the resurrection of the dead was not the reason for which he was arrested, this move proved to be surprisingly beneficial for Paul.⁵⁰⁵ The strategy to change the topic from a particular problem (disturbances in Jerusalem) into a topic concerning a more general problem (the question of the resurrection of the dead) worked in Paul's favour since the debate turned into a heated religious discussion (Ac 23,7–10), which forced the Romans to return to the fortress Antonia in order to save Paul's life. As a result the Roman tribune indirectly got an answer to his doubts concerning the reason for the Jews' opposition to Paul, which was not of a political character but strictly concerned Jewish religious matters.

B.3 The Function of the Speech

This very unusual speech plays very important rule in the narrative and theological concept of Acts.⁵⁰⁶ Because of the fragmentary character of the speech, more than one function for the speech can be proposed.

After the crowd in Jerusalem did not accept Paul because of his service to Gentiles (Ac 22,1–21), he is now rejected by the head of the Sanhedrin, who refused to recognise Paul as a righteous Jew. It indicates the first possible function of the speech: Paul was entirely rejected by the inhabitants of Jerusalem (with the exception of the group of Jesus' followers) and the official leaders of Judaism.⁵⁰⁷

The second possible function of the speech concerns the narrative referring to Paul's imprisonment, to indicate the reason for Paul's applying for a trial in

504 Paul's statement that he is a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisees raises a problem concerning the possibility of a Pharisees' family living outside Judea. Concerning this problem see, for example: J. Murphy-O'Connor, *Paul: A Critical Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 56–59; W. Rakocy, *Paweł Apostoł [The Apostle Paul]* (Częstochowa: Święty Paweł, 2003), 42–44; Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 689–691. Note that Luke twice indicates that from Paul's perspective the interrogation is recognised as a trial (Ac 23,3,6).

505 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 718. In verse 8, Luke mentions also angels and spirits as elements of the heritage of Judaism not recognised by the Sadducees. Meier's interpretation of verse 8 has been subjected to criticism by scholars. J.P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, vol. 3 (New York: Bantam Doubleday, 2001), 408. As the example of criticism see F. Parker, "The Terms 'Angel' and 'Spirit' in Acts 23,8," *Bib* 84 (2003): 244–365.

506 Schubert, "The Final Cycle of Speeches in the Book of Acts," 6.

507 In our opinion, it is the main function of the speech.

Rome (Ac 23,11). The Romans, after recognition of the real reason for opposition towards Paul, were unable to properly handle the whole situation, what led to an escalation of antagonism against Paul (the conspiracy).⁵⁰⁸ This prolonged administrative problem, which started in Jerusalem, will lead to Paul's final decision (Ac 25,10) that was, according to Luke's account, another step in God's plan for Paul (Ac 23,11).

The third possible function of the speech is of a theological nature and fits particularly into Luke's general theological design in the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles (Ac 5,33–42). The speech indicates that among the many groups within Judaism the closest to the group called Christians are the Pharisees, due to their faith in resurrection of the dead, which is the basic tenet of the Christian faith (Ac 23,9).⁵⁰⁹

The fourth possible function of the speech is to give the reason (in Luke's narrative concept) for Paul's speech before Felix (Ac 24,11–21).⁵¹⁰ The speech before the Sanhedrin is the second speech in a section of the topical speeches (Ac 22,1–21, 23,1.6.26–30) concerning Paul's imprisonment in Jerusalem, which will be followed by the last conclusive speech shaped in form of an official letter (Ac 23,26–30). The first speech (Ac 21,1–21) shows that the Jews in Jerusalem did not accept Paul's claim that he was sent by God to proclaim the Gospel to Gentiles, and the second speech (Ac 23,1.6) shows that the Sanhedrin did not consider Paul to be a faithful servant of God. These two speeches indicate the antagonism of the Jews in Jerusalem towards Paul that leads to the conspiracy recorded by Luke in Ac 23,12–22 and finally to the decision of Claudius Lysias, which caused a new stage of Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea.

C *The Letter of Claudius Lysias (Ac 23, 26–30)*

The Letter of Claudius Lysias is an *elogium*, an official report concerning legal matters.⁵¹¹ However, G.M. Paul rightly points to the fact that “the letters included in the works are hardly to be distinguished in effect from speeches,” and O. Padilla notes that in ancient literature the letters quoted in narratives were

508 This aspect will be developed further in Luke's narrative (Ac 23,12–25,12).

509 In our opinion, it is rather an additional function of the speech. However, it must be noticed that the topic of resurrection, in the narrative of Paul's imprisonment, gradually becomes the most important argument proving religious character of Jews' antagonism against Paul.

510 In the final part of the speech before Felix Paul uses the argument that the Sanhedrin did not find him guilty of any crime (Ac 24,20–21).

511 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 698–699.

viewed under the same category as speeches.⁵¹² We are of the opinion that, as in the cases of Ac 4,23–31 and Ac 15,22–29, the letter of Claudius Lysias serves in Luke's narrative as the third and final speech in the section concerning the period of Paul's imprisonment in Jerusalem.

The text of Ac 23, 26–30

²⁶ Claudius Lysias to the excellency the governor Felix, greetings. ²⁷ This man had been seized by some Jews, and was on the point of being killed by them, when I came upon them with my force and rescued him, as I learnt that he is a Roman citizen. ²⁸ Wanting to know exactly the ground of the charges they made against him, I brought him before their council. ²⁹ I found that their charges were connected with questions of their Law, and that there was nothing alleged involving either death or imprisonment. ³⁰ Having information of a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, ordering his accusers to prosecute him before you.

C.1 The Structural Analysis of the Letter

The letter is the official report of Claudius Lysias, the tribune of the Roman cohort in Jerusalem, which is sent to Felix, the procurator of Judea, who resided in Caesarea. The report, which became part of Paul's file during the trial, concerns in a very schematic manner, the case of the Jewish prisoner with Roman citizenship, since his arrest until his sending to Caesarea.⁵¹³ The context of the letter, described in Ac 23,12–25, shows that the conspiracy of the Jews against Paul (Ac 23,12–15), which became known to the tribune (Ac 23,16–22), forced the tribune to send Paul to Caesarea in order to protect his life (Ac 23,23–25). In the report, Lysias gives an account concerning the reason for Paul's arrest (v. 27), his action undertaken to investigate the case (v. 28), and the result of the investigation (v. 29). The report ends with a presentation of the reason for sending the prisoner to Caesarea (v. 30). The content focuses on the sending Paul from Jerusalem and his official handing over (with comments on his trial) by Felix in Caesarea (Ac 23,31–35).

The letter takes the ancient classical form. It starts with an indication of the sender, the addressee, and greetings presented in v. 26. Then follows the body of the letter, which is contained in vv. 27–30. There is no closing greeting in the letter, although this is added in some manuscripts.⁵¹⁴

⁵¹² G.M. Paul, "Sallust," in *Latin Historians*, ed. T.A. Direy (London: Routledge, 1966), 100; Padilla, *The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts*, 201.

⁵¹³ Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3331.

⁵¹⁴ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 405.

C.2 The Meaning of the Letter

The Letter starts with casual greetings (v. 26) indicating the sender (Claudius Lysias) and the addressee (Felix, the procurator of Judea). Claudius Lysias is known to us only from Luke's account in Acts.⁵¹⁵ Lysias was not born as the Roman citizen, but he bought citizenship (Ac 22,28).⁵¹⁶ Luke presents him as the tribune of the Roman cohort in Jerusalem.⁵¹⁷ In a short narrative concerning the tribune, Luke describes him by his deeds and words, which in general terms correlate to each other. Lysias as the tribune acts quickly, properly and justly. The report shows Lysias as a person competent in his office, who acts properly according to his duties in order to protect a Roman citizen.⁵¹⁸

More can be said about Felix from the information provided by Flavius Josephus. Claudius Antonius Felix was a freedman, whose brother Pallas was a very influential person at the court of Claudius (AD 41–54). Because of these connections he became the procurator of Judea from AD 53 to AD 55.⁵¹⁹ The evaluation of Felix's governor service not only by Luke but also by Josephus is not positive.⁵²⁰

Verse 27 contains a short account concerning the event described by Luke in Ac 21,27–40 and 22,22–29. Lysias writes that Jews attacked Paul and were about to kill him. This information is true despite the fact that the reason and the context of the Jews' action are not mentioned at all. Then Lysias writes that he saved Paul life. This is also true, but Lysias' real intention is not mentioned (Ac 21,31–39). What Lysias leaves out of the report is the fact that “*there was tumult all over Jerusalem*”.⁵²¹ The final item of information that Lysias writes of in verse 27 concerns Paul's Roman citizenship, which places Lysias as the

515 He was Greek and his Greek name (Lysias) became his *cognomen* as well as the name of Caesar (Claudius) became his *nomen gentile*. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 434.

516 Concerning the possibility of obtaining Roman citizenship, see Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 679–684.

517 The term *χiliάρχος* means *military tribune* and it refers to the commander of the cohort, which was the military unit consisting of 600 soldiers.

518 The very schematic character of Lysias report is readily apparent. His omission of some facts puts his competence in some doubt. This, however, may reflect more the nature of the Roman Empire administrative system than the character of Lysias himself. For different opinion, see Padilla, *The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts*, 195–196.

519 The exact dating of Felix's service as the governor of Judea cannot be determined. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 194–195.

520 See *Ant.* 20.137–138, 20.182 (Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, vol. 9, LCL (London, 1965), 160–163); Ac 24,22–27.

521 D.P. Bechard, “The Disputed Case Against Paul: a Redaction-Critical Analysis of Acts 21,27–22,29,” *CBQ* 65 (2003), 243.

one who saved the Roman citizen from the dangerous Jews.⁵²² In connection with this matter Lysias omitted from the report the fact that he unintentionally violated the rights of the Roman citizen (Ac 21,24–29).⁵²³

Verse 28 refers to the next steps undertaken by Lysias in the case. In order to know the reason for the crowd's attempt to kill Paul, Lysias required an interrogation before the Sanhedrin. At that point Luke's narrative (Ac 22,30) and Lysias' report agree (Ac 23,28).

In verse 29 Lysias presents the conclusion of his investigation. He acknowledges that accusation against Paul concerns Jewish religious matters. This in general agrees with Luke's account (Ac 23,6–10), however Lysias omitted to note the conflict within the Sanhedrin (Ac 23,7–10).⁵²⁴ The second conclusion concerns Paul's innocence in terms of Roman law.⁵²⁵ There is no information in Luke's narrative about this investigation, but the conclusion can refer to Lysias' first supposition (Ac 21,37–38). These two conclusions on Lysias' part suggest that Paul should be tried before the Jewish authorities rather than before the governor of Judea. Fitzmyer rightly points to the fact that Lysias' conclusion that Paul did not offend against Roman law is an important statement in Luke's narrative.⁵²⁶ From the very beginning of Paul's imprisonment the Roman official was convinced that Paul was not guilty of any crime warranting capital punishment under Roman law.

After concluding that Paul did not break Roman law, Lysias had to offer sufficient reason for sending an innocent Roman citizen to the procurator. In v. 30 Lysias presents the reason for his action. The Jews, because of a dispute concerning Jewish religious matters, plotted to attempt Paul's assassination, which *de facto* would be a crime against a Roman citizen. The duty of the tribune was to protect Roman citizens, and in this case it meant sending the prisoner to Caesarea.⁵²⁷ Under the protection of the procurator, Paul will be

522 S. Legasse, "L'Apologétique à l'égard de Rome dans procès de Paul (Acts 21,27–26.32)," *RScRel* 69 (1981): 249–256.

523 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 405.

524 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3338.

525 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 938.

526 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 728.

527 Lysias' real intention remains uncertain. It is possible that he just wants to protect the Roman citizen. It is possible that from his perspective, taking Paul out of Jerusalem was the best solution to calm the situation in the city. It is possible that he tried to avoid military conflict between 40 Jews and his troops. It is possible that a request from the Sanhedrin could be for him difficult not to favour. In fact, on the one hand Lysias in making a preventative move, but on the other hand he risks that the procurator may learn from Paul a more detailed version of the events, than he presented in the report.

saved from possible assassination, and the problem was transferred from an always volatile Jerusalem to a much calmer Caesarea. The logical consequence of this action was to put the case of Paul on trial but before the Roman authorities, rather than to risk another interrogation. For this reason, probably after Paul had found shelter in Caesarea, the Jews were informed by Lysias that the case of Paul had become a matter for trial before the procurator in Caesarea, under which circumstances the Jews must send their delegation. In fact, it was Lysias who put Paul's case during the first official trial. Because Paul's case in Jerusalem did not go forward as an investigation, the Lukan Lysias' determination of the accusers in Ac 23,30 is problematic, since the context Ac 21,27–23,22 suggests the crowd, however Ac 24,1 informs of the presence of the Sanhedrin, who presents the official accusation and takes part in the trial.⁵²⁸

C.3 The Function of the Letter

If we take the letter (Ac 23,26–30) as a separate unit, the function of the letter would become a typical report to the superior in office whose main aim would be to give a coherent account concerning the particular case.⁵²⁹ In this case Ac 23,26–30 shows the way in which Claudius Lysias evaluated the event in Jerusalem. This approach would link the letter to following narrative concerning the trial in Caesarea (Ac 23,30).

If we take the letter as part of Luke's narrative concerning Paul's imprisonment in Jerusalem, the content of the letter of Lysias can be compared to the account given by Luke.⁵³⁰ In this case we notice differences in these two accounts, and they draw our attention to the person of Lysias.

If we take the letter of Lysias as the third speech concerning Paul's imprisonment in Jerusalem, we see that the function of the letter is to present the final conclusion concerning Paul's case, made here by a Roman official.⁵³¹ The first speech (Ac 22,1–21) in the section referring to Paul's imprisonment in Jerusalem shows that the Jews in Jerusalem did not accept the fact that Paul's mission was of divine origin. The second speech (Ac 23,1.6) in the section shows that Paul was not considered by the Sanhedrin to be a Jew faithfully serving God (Ac 23,1). The letter shows that Lysias found Paul to be guilty of

528 The sequence of the facts is reversed in Luke's narration, where first the trial is decided (Ac 23,30.35) and then the accusation and the accusers are presented (Ac 24,1–9).

529 Fitzmyer thinks that it is an example of a *litterae dimissoriae* (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 726).

530 This kind of analysis is provided by Keener (*Acts*, vol. 3, 3332–3336).

531 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3331–3339.

no crime against Roman law, and that the controversy concerned the Jewish religious issues.⁵³² From here until the end of Acts (Ac 28,17–18) these are the main statements concerning Paul's case. In our opinion, this function must be counted as preferable.

3.3.2 Caesarea—before Felix

A *The Speech of Tertullus (Ac 24, 2–8)*

After Lysias had learnt about the conspiracy against Paul, in order to save a Roman citizen he sent him to Caesarea, the place of residence of the procurator Felix.⁵³³ Lysias also sent a letter with the required explanation concerning the case of Paul (Ac 13,26–30). The Roman citizen, whom he is sending to Felix, was not found guilty of any crime against Roman law, and the possible accusation, made against him by the Jews, was rather a matter related to the Jewish Law. In this case, Felix had to put on trial a Roman citizen accused about matters concerning Jewish religious problems, something that was not common practice for the Romans. The speech of Tertullus is the first of the three speeches concerning Paul in the trial before Felix. Tertullus, an attorney, represents the accusers, makes their case, and his speech has a particular function in the whole narrative concerning the trial before Felix.

The text of Ac 24, 2–8

² He said: we enjoy much peace through you, and because of your oversight the improvement of this nation become. ³ We acknowledge this in every way and everywhere with all thankfulness, the most excellent Felix. ⁴ But, to detain you no further, I beg you, in your kindness, to give us a brief hearing. ⁵ We have found this man a pest who stirs up dissension among all the Jews throughout the world and the leader of the Nazarene sect. ⁶ He even attempted to desecrate the Temple, but we caught him. ^{(7) 8} By examining him yourself you will be able to learn from him about everything of which we accuse him.

532 This statement Padilla considers as the first function of this speech in Acts, (*The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts*, 204–206).

533 Dating of Felix's office as the procurator of Judea is issue often discussed among scholars. The span of the time goes from AD 52 till AD 60. Concerning the problem see Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 194–195; Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3331.

A.1 The Structural Analysis of the Speech

Luke places the speech in the narrative concerning Paul's trial before Felix, which is presented as being an *extra ordinem* process.⁵³⁴ The first speech is given by Tertullus, the rhetorician from the side of Paul's opponents, and it contains the accusation against Paul (Ac 24,2–8).⁵³⁵ Tertullus was a professional orator who was employed by the High Priest of the Jerusalem Temple to represent the Jews during the trial against Paul before Felix, the procurator of Judea.⁵³⁶ It is not certain if Tertullus himself was a Jew or a Roman.⁵³⁷ Luke presents him as the legal advocate of the Jews, who according to the order of Lysias (Ac 23,30) brought the charge against Paul to the procurator.

The speech of Tertullus begins with an *exordium*, including an elaborated *captatio benevolentiae* in vv. 2–3. It is followed by a short *narratio* given in v. 4, where the lack of an extensive presentation of Paul's case is explained by way of excuse as being done out of respect for the busy Felix. Verse 5 is the *propositio* of the speech, which presents Paul's crime. It is supported by a *probatio*

534 The process *extra ordinem* undertaken in order to protect an individual's interests was a public-law procedure, which appeared as an exception to regular, formal procedures of a private-law character. I. Jaramaz and R.T. Medančić, "Cognitio extra ordinem u rimskom pravu [Cognitio extra ordinem in Roman Law]," *Pravnik*, 40 (1/2006): 79–109. Concerning Paul's trial before Felix many procedures seem to be unusual: 1. Roman citizen free from any offence against Roman law is put on the trial; 2. the procurator makes a decision about trial before the official accusation was presented; 3. the accusation was presented on the day of the trial; 4. the trial took place almost immediately after the problem occurred (five days after the incident in Jerusalem); 5. the Jewish religious matter is the subject of the Roman trial in Caesarea. In our opinion, all these indicate that the main reason for the trial is to protect a Roman citizen.

535 Tertullus is a Latin name, which makes it possible that he was a Roman rhetorician in the service of the High Priest of the Jerusalem Temple. Although his use of "we" suggests that Tertullus was a Jew, this may indicate merely that he speaks in the name of the Jews. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 704. The fact that among Paul's accusers we find a professional rhetorician and the High Priest may indicate the importance of the case. Padilla, *The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts*, 210–212.

536 Taking into consideration that the Jews were about to accuse Paul, a Roman citizen from the birth before the Roman procurator (the freedman), it sufficiently explains the reason for employing a professional orator instead of addressing the accusation in person.

537 The use of the first person plural pronoun in each verse of his speech suggests that he is a Jew or at least a Hellenistic Jew. However, taking into consideration the fact that Tertullus acts as the official representative (legal advocate) of the Jews, the use of the first person plural pronoun may simply be a rhetorical usage. The idea that Tertullus was not a Jew can be supported by verses 2 and 9 that seem to distinguish between Tertullus and the Jews. F.S. Spencer, "Tertullus," in *Dictionary of the Bible*, 1287.

given in v. 6 where the main argument is Paul's attempt to profane the Temple, which was a capital offence.⁵³⁸ The speech ends with a *peroratio* in v. 8, which suggests that Felix's interrogation of Paul will confirm the accusation.

After hearing the prosecutor's speech, Felix gives his attention to the Paul's defence (Ac 24,10–21). The authors of both speeches act as professional rhetoricians and they give their speeches in well-crafter rhetoric.⁵³⁹

A.2 The Meaning of the Speeches

Tertullus' speech begins with an *exordium* that contains a *captatio benevolentiae* that is purposely quite extensive and elaborate, as can be expected in a case in which the speaker lacks strong arguments to present.⁵⁴⁰ The content of the *exordium* was deliberately created by Tertullus in order to earn the favour of Felix. The opening sentence of the speech (v. 2) contains a double praise addressed to Felix referring to the peace and reforms, which the Jewish nation was experiencing during his rule. These two praise formulas are examples of rhetorical flattery that is based on a few positive elements but at the same time consciously omits the common evaluation of the whole situation in order to strengthen his own position by earning the favour of the procurator.⁵⁴¹ Josephus (*Ant.* 20,160–182, *Bell.* 2,257–70) presents Felix in very negative way, accusing him of having been responsible for pushing the Jewish nation to the war against Rome, by his unjust and oppressive conduct as the ruler of Judea (*Ant.* 20,160–167). In fact, during the time of Felix's inappropriate administration of Judea there was much trouble and unrest among the Jews.⁵⁴² When Tertullus speaks about peace, he may refer to a few particular situations like putting an end to the activities of brigands led by Eleazar (*Bell.* 2.252–253) rather than to

538 The Western Text has an addition between verse 6 and verse 8: "but Lysias the tribune came and took him away from us with great violence, ordering those accusing him to come before you". Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 434. For a proposal of a different construction of the speech see Padilla, *The Speeches of Outsiders*, 218.

539 Luke's accounts of the speeches contain only the outlines (summaries) of the real speeches, and are fashioned to suit his narrative conception. The speeches merely contain the most crucial statements and points of each of the speeches. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 198.

540 The *narratio* (v. 4) presents many facts that could support the accusation (vv. 5–6), which allows us to suppose that the accusers, aware of the weakness of their position, employed a professional orator to skilfully emphasise the *captatio benevolentiae* by including statements that the High Priest of the Jerusalem Temple could find difficult to articulate.

541 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3364–3366.

542 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 410.

the wider situation in Jerusalem and Judea (*Ant.* 20.161–180, *Bell.* 2.261–270).⁵⁴³ According to the Lukan Tertullus, these achievements of Felix, who is called here “*the most noble*,”⁵⁴⁴ earned him the permanent gratitude of all Jews (v. 3), which is a statement that hardly reflected reality, but perfectly fits the aim of forensic rhetorical speeches, since it puts strong but indirect expectation on the procurator that this particular case should confirm the presented view.⁵⁴⁵ In the *narratio* (v. 4) Tertullus expresses his intent to present the matter briefly in order not to inconvenience Felix (v. 4). This sentence indicates that Tertullus is about to give the speech in a proper but schematic manner, and without going over the limited time.⁵⁴⁶ It also indicates that Tertullus’ aim is to present the matter as being obvious and with no need for prolonged arguments or for going into the background and the context of the case. However, from the reader’s point of view it may indicate lack of strong evidences for the accusation. It would explain the use of the phrase “*I urge you in your graciousness to give us a brief hearing*,” which suggests that the good will of Felix, who is involved in a trial concerning Jewish religious matters, is required here in order to achieve Tertullus’ aim.

The next part of the speech (*proposito*) includes Tertullus’ charge against Paul (v. 5). Without doubt, Tertullus and those whom he is representing recognised Paul as being a dangerous man, whom they describe as a plague spreading through the whole world and making disturbances among the Jews.⁵⁴⁷ By using the phrase, *he stirs up trouble among Jews the world over*, Tertullus tries to present the action of Paul as a danger not only for Jerusalem or Judea but also for the peace in the whole Roman Empire.⁵⁴⁸ By adding that Paul is a leader of the sect called the Nazarenes, Tertullus transfers the action concerning Paul

543 Josephus’ account concerning the conflict between the High Priest Jonathan and Felix put in great doubt Felix’s good will and interest in prosperity of the nation (*Ant.* 20.160–167).

544 This expression was common in the exordium of a petition addressed to the procurator. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 953.

545 It can hardly be expected that the Jews accepted the Roman reforms or the conditions of the *Pax Romana*. Furthermore, Felix is presented by Josephus (*Bell.* 2.253–270) as being a very poor administrator. J.A. Brooks, “Felix,” *Dictionary of the Bible*, 459–460.

546 During a trial the time allowed for speeches by the advocates was limited and they had to promise to be brief. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 198–199.

547 The term εὕρισκω—*find* can mean to find after searching; to find accidentally; to discover by observation; to be found to be. The use of the active aorist suggests that the Jews after searching found Paul to be a dangerous man. The expression τὸν ἄνδρα τοῦτον λοιμὸν—*this man a perfect pest* may have a stronger meaning than today’s meaning of pest and it may mean “the evil man”. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 410–411.

548 Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 439–441.

from the individual case into the widespread action of the new sect, which is not accepted by mainstream Judaism, and as well is not recognised by the Roman Empire.⁵⁴⁹ Tertullus' accusation contains several details, which show Luke's perspective on relations between mainstream Judaism (the Sanhedrin) and the new sect within Judaism (the Nazarenes). Tertullus uses the name Nazarenes and not Christians, which on the one hand indicates the marginal nature of the sect, which comes from Galilee and not from Judea, and on the other hand it avoids recognising Jesus as Christ (Messiah) being the true leader of the sect. Paul is considered to be the leader of the sect, what most probably indicates here his exceptional activities in proclaiming Jesus' teaching, rather than suggesting that he held any position among the leaders of the Jewish Christian community in Jerusalem.⁵⁵⁰ However, it is possible that Tertullus, by presenting Paul as the leader of Nazarenes who caused disturbances among Jews through the whole world, is trying to make profit of Felix's experience concerning the case of the false Egyptian prophet (*Bell.* 2.261–263).

The *probatio* of the thesis that Paul is a dangerous man (*propositio*) is his attempt to profane the Temple, which was a reason for his arrest (v. 6). Tertullus does not say how Paul tried to profane the Temple, which leaves his arguments very general.⁵⁵¹ Paul's attempt to profane the Temple was a reason for his arrest by the Jews—clearly suggesting here the Temple authorities—but this does not agree with Luke's narrative in Ac 21,27–40 where the Romans are the agents of Paul's arrest.⁵⁵² This version of the text in the context of Ac 21,27–40 seems to present the last words of Tertullus' speech as being untrue. However, there is a textual problem in Ac 24,6–8 deriving from the omission of verse 7 ("*but Lysias the tribune came and took him away from us with great violence, ordering those accusing him to come before you*") in the text of Greek New Testament in use since the nineteenth century.⁵⁵³ Without verse 7, the purpose of the Tertullus' speech is to make the case of Paul to be one of a political nature involving the Roman juridical system, since the transgression of the

549 The plural form of Ναζωραῖος appears only in Ac 24,5. The term is equivalent to the term Christian.

550 The term πρωτοστάτην—leader appears only once in the New Testament.

551 Based on Luke's narrative the readers know that the argument refers to Ac 21,28–29.

552 Luke presents the action of the crowd as an attempt to kill Paul, and not simply an attempt to arrest him.

553 The verse is included in the *Textus Receptus*. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 434. Concerning the textual problems of the Acts, see W.A. Strange, *The Problem of the Text of Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

Temple was an offence punished with the capital penalty.⁵⁵⁴ Including verse 7, the purpose of Tertullus' speech would be to make the case of Paul the subject of the trial before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, due to violation by Lysias of the Jewish right to judge matters concerning the Jewish religion.⁵⁵⁵ However, since it was a trial and not just an interrogation, the matter of jurisdiction of the different authorities had to be decided, due to Paul's Roman citizenship, what in our opinion makes the latter interpretation irrelevant. Notable is the fact that Luke's writing about an attempt to profane the Temple and not about the event, which actually had occurred, indicates the weakness of Tertullus' proof that probably serves Luke's narrative purpose, which is to show Paul's innocence before the Jewish Law.⁵⁵⁶

In *exordium* of the speech, Tertullus shows his conviction concerning two things.⁵⁵⁷ First, he is convinced about the truth of the accusation; and second, he is convinced about the fact that Felix will be of the same opinion after interrogation of Paul (v. 8).⁵⁵⁸ In Luke's narrative these last words of Tertullus serve as the direct reason for Paul's speech in his self-defence.

A.3 The Function of the Speech

The speech of Tertullus is given at the beginning of the official trial of Paul before Felix, the governor of Judea. It is the accusation speech, presenting the charge against the subject of the trial, in order to gain a guilty conviction. Although, the form and the aim of the speech (Ac 24,2–8) follow a rhetorical style, however, the accusation (vv. 5–6) are not rhetorically developed, giving the impression of the speech being schematic and perfunctory in character.

554 In this case, Paul should be judged by the Roman authorities, based on the crime against the Roman law, since the sanctity of the Temple was guaranteed by Roman procurator. Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 233. This interpretation indicates that the main purpose of Tertullus' speech is to make the case of Paul to be condemned by Romans. However, Johnson is of the opinion that even without verse 7 the meaning of verse 6 implies that Paul's case should be handled by the Sanhedrin. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 411.

555 If we include v. 7, the subject of vv. 7–8 would be changed from Paul to Lysias, which explains better the decision of Felix in Ac 24,22. However, with the verse 7, at the end of his accusation against Paul, Tertullus would indirectly introduce a new subject (Lysias) in his accusation, which from both the rhetorical and grammatical perspectives (the verb ἀνακρίνω generally applies to interrogation of the prisoner) seems to be impossible.

556 The Jews from Asia accused Paul of having profaned the Temple, and not just attempting to do so (Ac 21,28).

557 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 956.

558 In the Western text, where v. 7 is added, the subject of the interrogation is not Paul but Lysias. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 411.

This is probably due to Luke's approach in generally arranging the topical speeches in each particular section. In this section concerning the Paul's trial before Felix, the speech of Tertullus is an introductory speech indicating the topic of the three speeches in the whole section. The topic of the speeches concerns Paul's crimes, listed by Tertullus as: disturbances among the Jews in the whole Empire; leadership of the sect called the Nazarenes; an attempt to profane the Temple. These accusations will be answered in Paul's speech. The particular function of the speech is to prepare the ground for Paul's speech.

B *The Speech of Paul before Felix (Ac 24, 10–21)*

The speech of Paul is his apology against the accusation schematically presented in the speech of Tertullus. This is his first official speech during the trial before the Roman procurator. The speech of Tertullus showed the main line of the accusation brought by the leading Jews from Jerusalem who tried to present Paul's case as being a crime against Roman law.⁵⁵⁹ Paul in his apology first must answer to the accusation in way that weakens the strength of the arguments put forward by the prosecutor, and secondly he must present his version of the events and arguments, which will convince the judge. It makes the speech of crucial importance for Paul's future, since the decision of the procurator will work for or against him. However, considering the lack of a final verdict from the judge, a question about function of the speech in Luke's narrative concerning Paul's trial before Felix becomes an intriguing subject for analysis.

The text of Ac 24, 10–21

¹⁰ Knowing, that for many years you the judge to this nation, I cheerfully make my defence. ¹¹ You can verify that it is not more than twelve days that I went up to worship in Jerusalem, ¹² where my prosecutors never found me holding discussions with anyone, or causing a crowd to collect, either in the Temple, or in the synagogues, or in the city; ¹³ Neither can they prove to you the charges of which they now accuse me. ¹⁴ However, I confess this to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect I do serve the God of our fathers, believing everything that is written in the Law and in the prophets; ¹⁵ I have a hope in God, which they themselves

⁵⁵⁹ Luke's account of Tertullus' speech contains rather insufficient arguments for supporting his main accusation (an attempt to profane the Temple), which allows Paul, in brief manner, to present convincing proof that the accusation lacks grounds (Ac 24,17–19), and consequently to use much of his defence time for an extensive presentation of the true reason for the controversy between him and the Jews.

also accept that there will be a resurrection of the righteous and the unrighteous.¹⁶ This being so, I always do my best to have my conscience clear before God and all people.¹⁷ After some years' absence I had come to bring alms to my nation, and to make offerings.¹⁸ When I was doing this, they found me in the Temple, completing the rite of purification, but not with any crowd or disorder.¹⁹ There were, however, some Jews from Asia who ought to have been here before you, and to have made a charge if they have anything against me.²⁰ Or else let this men here say what they found wrong in me when I was before the council,²¹ except to the one sentence that I shouted out as I stood amongst them: It is about the resurrection of the dead that I am on my trial before you today.

B.1 The Structural Analysis of the Speech

Paul's speech (Ac 24,10–21) follows almost immediately the speech of Tertullus (Ac 24,2–9), and in fact it is Paul's answer to the accusation, where more space (Ac 24,14–21) is given to answer the first accusation (Ac 24,5), than to the second one (Ac 24,6). The speech begins with an *exordium* containing a *captatio benevolentiae* (v. 10), which is shorter than the *exordium* of Tertullus' speech. It does not contain the praise of Felix, and the *captatio benevolentiae* is reduced to mention of Felix's competence in judging Jewish affairs.⁵⁶⁰ Verse 11 is a short *narratio* concerning the single, but very important, piece of evidence, which throws doubt on all the accusations presented by Tertullus. Paul's stay in Jerusalem was too short to allow all the problems alleged against him to have taken place (v. 11).⁵⁶¹ In next verse (v. 12), which is the *propositio* of the speech, Paul claims his innocence concerning the accusation about inciting the people in Jerusalem. The longest part of Paul's speech is *probatio* (vv. 13–20), which contains answers to Tertullus' accusations concerning Paul's religious and political activities (Ac 24,5–6). The last part of the speech is the *peroratio* (v. 21) in which Paul reminds the court of the real reason for his being persecuted.

The speeches of Paul together with the speech of Tertullus constitute the main part of the narration concerning his trial before Felix.⁵⁶² However, there is a brief conclusion indicating that Felix postponed the trial, officially due to the necessity of interrogating the tribune Lysias (v. 22b), but according to Luke due to his knowledge concerning Christians (Ac 24,22a).

⁵⁶⁰ Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 199.

⁵⁶¹ Conzelmann thinks that the information about two weeks indicates that Paul's stay in Jerusalem can be easily reviewed. However, it is the trial before Felix and not the investigation that precedes the trial (*Acts of the Apostles*, 199).

⁵⁶² Narration outside the speeches consists of few verses: Ac 24,1–2a.10a.22–23.

B.2 The Meaning of the Speech

When the time for Paul's apologetic speech comes he begins with a short *exordium* (v. 10), which indicates that Felix had been governor for a long time, making him a judge with great experience who knows the customs and religion-historical background of the people he is about to judge.⁵⁶³ These words, although based on information concerning Felix, are used here as a *captatio benevolentiae* in order to earn the favour of Felix, rather than as a statement concerning his manner of judging.⁵⁶⁴ Knowing that the governor was familiar with the Jewish world made Paul more confident about result of his apology.⁵⁶⁵

Verse 11 is a short *narratio*, which contains a very important message for Felix. Paul by stating that he only recently came to Jerusalem dismissed all possible accusation referring to his involvement in disturbances within Jewish society. The reason for his coming was of a religious nature.⁵⁶⁶ Paul shows his conviction that Felix would be able to verify Paul's information, which should be understood as referring to bringing the trial to a proper conclusion rather than a suggestion that Felix undertakes an investigation of the events.⁵⁶⁷

In the *propositio* Paul presents his claim of innocence, with reference to the main line of Tertullus' accusation concerning Paul's activities to raise up the people, that there is no witness who can prove that he did wrong in the city, in the synagogues, or in the Temple (v. 12).⁵⁶⁸ Paul strongly claims that he is not guilty of any crime according to Roman law, since Romans were very sensitive to accusations concerning disturbances among the people of Jerusalem because they happened very often and caused considerable problems to the authorities (Ac 21,38).⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶³ Ac 24,24 informs that a wife of Felix was Jew.

⁵⁶⁴ Ac 24,26 suggests that Felix was familiar with bribes' affairs. See Josephus, *Bell.* 2.272–274.

⁵⁶⁵ Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 199. After Pilate (AD 26–36), Felix was second in length of taking his position as the procurator (AD 52–60). Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 735.

⁵⁶⁶ Ac 24,17 mentions also a donation for poor in Jerusalem church as the reason, however it is not mentioned here most probably because of Luke's narrative strategy, since Felix "expectation" (Ac 24,26) was grounded on this piece of information.

⁵⁶⁷ In Ac 24,8 Tertullus used the same rhetoric pattern. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*, 118.

⁵⁶⁸ Paul's claim (Ac 24,12) refers to a particular place (Jerusalem), while the accusation of Tertullus concerns the whole world (Ac 24,5). G.S. Keener, *Acts. An Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 3395–3396.

⁵⁶⁹ Paul limited his answer to accusation of disturbing activities only in Jerusalem, although Tertullus spoke about the disturbances in the whole world, since on the one hand Tertullus' expression has rather rhetorical character than of real substance, and on the other hand Felix was possibly hardly interested in matters that do not consider Judea. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 633–634.

In the *probatio* of the speech (vv. 13–20), Paul gives evidences of his innocence concerning crimes presented by the accusers (Ac 24,5–6). He begins with a statement that Tertullus had not offered any evidence to support his accusation concerning disturbances in Jerusalem (v. 13), thus making it impossible that Paul be found guilty (Ac 24,8).⁵⁷⁰ In other words, Paul considers Tertullus' arguments as irrelevant to prove the accusation.⁵⁷¹ Paul's strong and harsh answer to the accusation concerning disturbing the peace in Jerusalem, contrasts with confident but gentle answer to accusations concerning Paul's religious activities.⁵⁷² He begins his apology with reference to the accusation that he is a *ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes* (Ac 24,5), which in the accusation made by Tertullus is presented in the context of Paul's rebellious activities around the whole world. The sect is here presented in very negative terms. First, Paul points to the fact that *they* (the Jews) called the group that Paul belong to as the sect of Nazarenes, thus indicating their rejection of the sect. Paul does not speak about a separate sect, but about the way within Judaism, which he has chosen to serve God of Israel, believing in the teaching of the Torah (v. 14).⁵⁷³ These teachings contain also the hope concerning the resurrection of people, which both groups share (v. 15). This presentation of *the way* contains a generalisation concerning the hope of resurrection, because this was a teaching only subscribed to by the Pharisees and not the whole of Judaism. Although this generalisation is corrected in v. 21, referring to the reason for the failure of Paul's interrogation before the Sanhedrin, it is probably another indication by Luke of similarity between Pharisees (the official group within Judaism) and Christians (an unofficial, non-accepted sect).⁵⁷⁴ Paul continues with the statement that faith in the resurrection of the upright and the wicked made him be aware of offending God and people (v. 16).⁵⁷⁵ In this way he presents the posi-

570 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 412.

571 In our opinion, v. 13 concerns the particular accusation (the political disturbances in Jerusalem) rather than all accusations presented by Tertullus.

572 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 635.

573 *The way* means here the Christian movement. For Paul the movement seems to be the fulfilment of Judaism. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 199.

574 Witherington III points to the possibility that one of Paul's accusers was a member of the Pharisees (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 711). However, this seems to be contradicted in Ac 14,9 and Ac 23,9. Paul talks about the general resurrection of good and bad, since Pharisees believed in the resurrection of good (*Bell.* 2.163 and probably *Ant.* 18.14).

575 In fact Paul in talking about himself describes the movement he belongs to. His description of the movement in vv. 14–16 takes a strictly theocentric character, and it lacks direct references to Jesus Christ, thus revealing Paul's attempt to present the sect as one belonging to Judaism, rather than something separated from it. Paul underlines the next

tive side of the movement, which should be recognised as “legitimate form of Judaism”.⁵⁷⁶ This is the last statement concerning the Nazarenes, however Paul says nothing about his leadership of the movement.

From v. 17 Paul in his apology turns to answer the accusation concerning his attempt to profane the Temple. He supplements information given in v. 11 with new details.⁵⁷⁷ In v. 11 Paul said that he spent only two weeks in the city, and now he adds that he came to Jerusalem after many years. In v. 11 Paul said that the purpose of this visit was to worship God, but now he adds that he came with assistance to his nation as well as to make offerings.⁵⁷⁸ This indication of the reason for Paul’s coming to Jerusalem shows him to be a pious Jew caring about the nation.⁵⁷⁹ In vv. 17–18 Paul describes the event in the Temple from his point of view, which is supported by the narrative Ac 21,27–31. Paul was purified in the Temple, and at that time there was no crowd or disturbance, which indicated indirectly that the Temple authorities did not interact with Paul then.⁵⁸⁰ The disturbances began when the crowd, including the Jews from Asia accusing Paul, offended him.⁵⁸¹ From the beginning until the end of the event the Temple authorities were not present, and accordingly they had no right to accuse Paul.⁵⁸² They were not eyewitnesses who could prove the

element: the movement’s worship of the God of the fathers (v. 14); belief and respect the Scripture (the Prophets and the Law); shared hope concerning the resurrection (v. 15); basing his behaviour on the faith (v. 16). Peterson, *The Acts of Apostles*, 635–636.

576 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 412–413.

577 The text of Paul’s speech would run more naturally if the vv. 17–19 were read after v. 12, and vv. 13–16 after v. 19. However, the presentation of the movement that Paul belongs to (Ac 24,14–16) as one within Judaism serves as the argument indicating that Paul and the Christian group was far from attempting to profane the Temple.

578 The financial assistance refers probably to the collection for “the saints in Jerusalem” (Rom 15,25–32, 1 Cor 16,1–4, 2 Cor 8–9, Gal 2,10), which is to be understood as the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, although in v. 17 Paul speaks in a more general way. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 199.

579 Luke in v. 17 at hoc mentions the collection, which may be included in order to serve as the grounds for the statement concerning Felix’s expectation (Ac 24,26). It is striking that the collection is not mentioned elsewhere. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3409–3412.

580 Note the sharp differences in Paul’s retelling and Tertullus’ accusation. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*, 119.

581 This information indicates that Paul’s visit to the Temple had a strictly religious purpose and nothing in common with agitation or other political activities. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 961.

582 The argument presented in v. 13 is amplified here in v. 19. The delegation not only cannot prove their accusation against Paul but also they have no grounds on which they may make the accusation, since they were not the eyewitnesses and the true eyewitnesses

accusation presented in Ac 24,6. The disturbance was caused by Jews from Asia who offended Paul in Jerusalem (v. 19), and it was they who should be Paul's accusers before Felix, who must prove their accusation known to readers from the narrative in Ac 21,27–28.

In v. 20 Paul turns to his interrogation before the Sanhedrin (Ac 22,30–23,10) that is the event in which the Paul's accusers participated. The Lukan Paul skillfully uses the reference to the event, hardly known to Felix but very well known to the reader (Ac 23,1–10), which on the one hand indicates that the Sanhedrin found no proof of Paul's guilt (the lack of a decision), while on the other hand it indicates strongly that the only controversy between Paul and some members of the Sanhedrin concerned a strictly religious issue within Judaism (an on-going controversy).⁵⁸³ The fact that the interrogation concluded in a heated discussion caused by Paul's confession that he believes in the resurrection of the dead (Ac 23,9), is now used in an ironic manner by Paul to prove that controversy about the resurrection of the body (v. 21) should be possibly the only solid reason for his accusation before Felix.⁵⁸⁴ However, this reason would make the accusation to be concerned with a religious matter, which was not what Tertullus wanted to achieve by his speech, since the Roman procurator couldn't judge the Roman citizen on a charge concerning a Jewish religious matter.

The Paul's answer (Ac 24,14–21) to the accusations (Ac 24,2–8) achieved two important goals. The first was that the problem, which Tertullus presented as a political issue, was successfully moved by Paul to the level of religious debate. The second was that Paul proved that the High Priest and the elders not only do not have any legal right to be his accusers, but also they had not found him guilty during the interrogation before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. Paul won this round in the fight, since Felix adjourned the case officially because of the need to confirm Lysias' version of the event (v. 22). However, in the context of Ac 23,26–30, this seems to be only a diplomatic way to inform the accusers of their loss. Nerveless, for two years Felix did not call Lysias, neither did Felix free Paul, but he kept Paul in prison waiting for a bribe.⁵⁸⁵

(Jews from Asia) abandoned their case against Paul. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 737. Concerning the abandoning the case in Roman law, see Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3418–3420.

583 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 637–638.

584 Paul's offending the high priest is completely omitted here (Ac 23,2–5).

585 Ac 24,17 and Ac 24,26 give grounds to suspect that a bribe was involved. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 715–716.

B.3 The Function of the Speech

The two speeches (Ac 24,2–8, 24,10–21) give details concerning the first legal trial of Paul before the Roman authorities, represented by Felix the governor of Judea. The trial was an example of *extra ordinem* process, where both sides were present and both sides presented their arguments. The position of the accusers is presented in the speech of Tertullus (Ac 24,2–8), which contains three main accusations that are attempting to put Paul's case on the political level. To these accusations Paul made his defence in the second speech (Ac 24,10–21), in which Paul successfully defends himself by pointing to the religious character of the accusation (Ac 24,21) and the inability of the accusers to provide the proofs (Ac 24,13).

In Luke's narrative concept the speech (Ac 24,10–21) serves as proof of Paul's innocence. The conclusion (Ac 23,29) of Lysias' investigation in Jerusalem concerning Paul's case as it is presented in his letter (Ac 23,28–29) is now attested in the speech of Paul. The reader is convinced that Paul is not guilty of any crime either against Roman law or against the Mosaic Law. However, the right decision of Felix, who possessed full authority and necessary knowledge (Ac 24,22) to declare Paul to be innocent, was not pronounced. In this context the speech takes on a progressive function within the section containing the three topical speeches concerning Paul's trial before Felix, since on the one hand it develops the topic presented in the first speech concerning the accusation against Paul (Ac 24,2–9), and on the other hand it creates a necessary background for a correct interpretation of the following speech, which in fact is reduced to the short pronouncement by Felix (Ac 24,22).

C The Pronouncement by Felix (Ac 24, 22)

The section concerning Paul's trial before Felix consists of two speeches and short narrative sections. The first speech is an accusation presented by Tertullus, which is followed by Paul's defence. Naturally, we would expect a third speech containing the judgment by Felix concerning Paul's case. However, there isn't as expected any speech by Felix. Instead, there is one short pronouncement, which comes as a surprise after the two preceding speeches. This suggests that there is some indirect message hidden by Luke in the words of Felix.

The text of Ac 24, 22

²² When Lysias, the tribune comes down, I will give my decision in your case.

C.1 The Structural Analysis of the Pronouncement

Luke's narrative concerning the trial before Felix consists mainly of the speeches. The last speech in the section, reduced here to a short utterance instead of Felix's judgment made on the basis of the two previous speeches (Ac 24,2–8, 24,10–21), contains Felix's explanation or official excuse for lack of a verdict.⁵⁸⁶ Luke informs us in Ac 24,22 that the reason for ending the trial in this way was Felix's knowledge concerning *the way*, which in the context of Ac 24,24–26 may suggest degree of sympathy towards Christianity, but it may also suggest no more than pragmatic curiosity.

Since the pronouncement is one single sentence, any structure for Ac 24,22 cannot be determined.

The narrative following the pronouncement contains Felix's order to keep watch over Paul, but in gentle manner and without limitations concerning his relations with the outside world (Ac 24,23). Luke writes that Felix frequently met Paul for two reasons. The first reason was to hear about Jesus, but this ended when Paul turned his teaching into moral admonition (Ac 24,24–25). The second reason was Felix's expectation of financial gain from setting Paul free (Ac 24,26), which became the reason for two-year period of Paul's imprisonment without the formal passing of an official sentence.

C.2 The Meaning of the Pronouncement

Felix made no official final judgment concerning Paul's case, but officially he “ἀνεβάλετο—*adjourned*” the case.⁵⁸⁷ Luke gives the two reasons for Felix's action, which do correspond with each other. The first reason is presented in Luke's narrative, where it is suggested that Felix adjourned the case, because ἀκριβέστερον εἰδὼς τὰ περὶ τῆς ὁδοῦ—[he] *was fairly well informed about the Way*. It is important to note that it is reason given by Luke to the reader and not by Felix to both sides of the conflict, thus indicating an interpretation of the possible reason rather than the reason itself.⁵⁸⁸ Luke wants the reader to know that Felix understood and interpreted the contents of Paul's defence

586 Peterson thinks that there are two reasons for the adjournment of the case: the first concerns Felix's knowledge about Christians, and the second to hear evidence from Lysias (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 638–639).

587 B.W. Winter, “Official Proceedings and the Forensic Speeches in Acts 25–26,” in *Ancient Literary Setting*, vol. 1 of *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, ed. B.W. Winter and A.D. Clarke (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 305–336.

588 Felix certainly possessed knowledge about Christians, since (1) he was procurator of Judea (Ac 24,10), which was the home of the movement; (2) his wife was a Jew, who would like to hear Paul's teaching (Ac 24,24); and (3) the moral teaching of Paul anointed him (Ac 24,25). Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 235; Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 963.

(Ac 24,14–21) in its messianic meaning. In this way Luke suggests that on the one hand Felix disagreed with Tertullus' accusation, and on the other hand he found Paul's defence to be rational and proper.⁵⁸⁹ The second part of verse 22 contains Felix reason for adjourning of the case presented to the accusers (Tertullus and the Jews), which indicates that the accusers will be informed of the results of their accusation after his consultation or interrogation of the tribune Lysias.⁵⁹⁰ This suggests that Felix wants the accusers to acknowledge that the reason for adjourning is not their weak accusation or Paul's convincing defence, but rather some doubts, which are raised after he confronted the three points of view (Lysias' report; Tertullus' speech, Paul's speech).⁵⁹¹ Although Luke has possessed his own interpretation, which is soon more elaborated (Ac 24,26), he presents Felix in verse 22b as the pragmatic ruler, who uses a diplomatic way to solve temporarily the case that could work against him, either he judge in favour of Paul (relation between procurator and the Sanhedrin) or he judge in favour of the Jews (Paul's Roman citizenship). However, Luke wants the reader to evaluate the action of Felix as unjust and for that reason he mentions the bribery problem (v. 26), which we should probably link with the statement of Paul's considerable wellbeing in the prison (v. 23) and his two year staying in prison without sentence (v. 27).⁵⁹² In this way, Luke portrays Felix as a governor who acts in his own particular interests (Ac 24,26–27).

C.3 The Function of the Pronouncement

The pronouncement by Felix is the third part (after Ac 24,2–8 and Ac 24,10–21) of the account concerning Paul's trial before Felix. In Luke's pattern the third speech in a section containing topical speeches serves as the conclusion of all three speeches. This is also the primal function of the pronouncement. The first official trial of Paul before Felix as the legal judge in the name of the Roman juridical system, was adjourned, this means he did not condemn Paul on the

589 Tertullus' accusation concerned political matters, but they were supported by religious evidence. A.N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 51.

590 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 414.

591 Witherington takes the utterance of Felix as "a public reason for adjournment without decision" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 714). The need for consultation would mean that he did not accept as sufficient the report of Lysias. In this case, the need for interrogation suggests that Tertullus' speech contained v. 7 as found in the *Textus Receptus* (Ac 24,7), which presents an accusation against Lysias. If so, Felix would give credibility to the accusation of Tertullus, but this seems to be less probable. Fitzmyer thinks that Felix wanted to confront the eyewitnesses (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 739).

592 At that point Luke agrees with Josephus evaluation of Felix's rule in *Bell.* 2.272–274.

basis of Tertullus' accusation, neither did he free him based on his convincing defence. By presenting the weaknesses of Tertullus' accusation and the persuasive arguments and defence by Paul, Luke creates a very suggestive backdrop to Felix's pronouncement. Against this backdrop the decision of Felix must be recognised as unjust. Felix kept Paul in the prison, not because of his inability to recognise the true intention of the Sanhedrin (with whom he was familiar after being governor for many years), or his inability to understand Paul's arguments, but only because of his private interest, as Luke directly indicates (Ac 24,26). Consequently, the responsibility for the subsequent events lay on the side of local Roman jurisdiction (Ac 25–28). Luke does not say this directly or openly, but Felix's decision resulted in forcing Paul to appeal to Caesar.⁵⁹³ It was a mistake or deliberate wrongdoing on the part of a Roman official that caused the innocent Jew with Roman citizenship to look for justice in Rome.⁵⁹⁴

3.3.3 Caesarea—before Festus

A *The Speech of Paul before Festus (Ac 25, 8. 10–11)*

Porcius Festus succeeded Felix as governor in the second half of the AD 50's and he died in office in AD 60.⁵⁹⁵ He was new to the region with little, if any, knowledge concerning the culture, religion and problems of the Jews (Ac 25,18–19). His first move was to go to Jerusalem (Ac 25,1), where the case of Paul was introduced to him by the most powerful men among the Jews (Ac 25,2), who asked Festus to send Paul back to Jerusalem. The plan of the Jews did not succeed (Ac 25,3) because Festus decided that the trial would take place in Caesarea. Surprisingly, Luke does not include the speech of the accusers but he begins directly with Paul's speech in his own defence. It strongly influences the function of the speech, which starts a new episode in the narrative concerning Paul's imprisonment.

593 *Prouocatio*—an appeal to the emperor was one of the most ancient rights grounded in the concept of *populus Romanus* and it was usually used in cases of disagreement with a magistrate's verdict, but it was also exercised in any early stage of the trial. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 453. Notice that in Ac 28,18–19 Luke's Paul seems to free the Romans from responsibility and put it all on the Jews. This question will be examined within an analysis of Paul's speech to the Jews in Rome (Ac 28,18–22).

594 Witherington III writes: "As we shall see, Roman law was indeed on Paul's side—he was not guilty of a chargeable offense. This does not mean that local Roman officials would necessarily be on Paul's side just because he was a Roman citizen" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 719).

595 There is not much information available concerning Festus. Even the date of the beginning of his office is not certain (AD 54, 56, 59 are suggested). Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 642–643.

The text of Ac 25, 8. 10–11

⁸ I have not committed any offence against the Jewish Law, or the Temple, or the Emperor.

¹⁰ Paul replied: I am standing at the Emperor's court, where I ought to be tried. I have not wronged the Jews, as you well recognize. ¹¹ If than I do wrong of something that deserve death, I do not ask to escape the death, but, if there is nothing in their accusations against me, no one has a right to surrender me to them. I appeal to Caesar.

A.1 The Structural Analysis of the Speech

The account concerning the trial before Festus in Caesarea is based on the account of the trial before Felix (Ac 24,1–23).⁵⁹⁶ Luke gives no details concerning the Jews who accused Paul, nor the content of their accusation. He only refers to “serious accusations”, but they failed to prove them (Ac 25,7).⁵⁹⁷ As for Paul's defence, Luke gives only a short résumé instead of a full account of the apology (Ac 25,8). The résumé takes the form of a statement denying Paul's responsibility in breaking any Jewish Law or defiling the Temple, or further for crime against Roman law, which here is referred to as “the person of Caesar”. In contrast to Felix who after hearing Paul's apology adjourned the case, Festus, according to Luke's narrative (v. 9) seems to be convinced by Paul's argumentation, and was ready to avoid a potential problem with the Jews by ceding

596 After reading the account concerning the trial before Felix, it is not necessary for the author to provide the reader a more elaborate account concerning the trial before Festus, since the accusations of the Sanhedrin and Paul's defence stay the same as in previous trial, thus making it possible to reduce the account to one final statement of Paul, which serves as the conclusion of the trial before Felix. Using this narrative device, Luke can move the narrative forwards by focusing on a new point (Paul's appeal to Caesar). Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3456–3457.

597 The phrase “serious accusation” can be determined if we recognise that verse 8 (Paul's apology) refers to the charges of the accusers. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 451–452. Among these three accusations only the last one “speaking against Caesar” seems to be new, since the other two accusations (Ac 24,4–5) have been successfully disproved in Paul's speech before Felix (Ac 24,10–21). Concerning the accusation of speaking against Caesar, with the exception of Ac 17,7 there is no trace of Paul's antagonistic attitude to the Emperor. Since Ac 17,7 concerns Ephesus and not Judea, that argument could hardly be used by the accusers', and if indeed it was, it would take on the meaning of very general accusation, similar in meaning but not in form to that presented in Ac 24,5 (*an agitator among all the Jews throughout the world*) but here rather with political than religious implications. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 989.

the case to Jewish jurisdiction, but for that he needed Paul's assent (Ac 25,9).⁵⁹⁸ Paul's answer to Festus' proposal was negative (Ac 25,10–11) and in the end he pointed to the fact that as a Roman citizen he ought to be judged by Caesar (Ac 25,10). The basis for this request by Paul was his insistence that he had not committed offences against the Jewish Law, and hence there was no reason for his being judged by Jewish authorities (Ac 25,10). According to Paul's words, Festus knew that he could not submit a Roman citizen to the jurisdiction of the Jews and despite his own intentions he had to abide by this legal obligation (Ac 25,11).⁵⁹⁹

Concerning structure, Paul's speech during the trial before Festus contains two parts.⁶⁰⁰ The first is Paul's answer to the accusation of the Jews, and in fact, here it is limited merely to Paul's final statement (Ac 25,8). The second part is the answer to Festus' proposal concerning the trial before the Sanhedrin. This part starts with Festus' proposition (v. 9b) and ends with Festus' final statements concerning Paul's appeal to Caesar (v. 12). Within these brackets is presented Paul's argumentation, which is arranged as a chiasm A-B-A¹, where A is a proposition in v. 10a (*I am standing before the tribunal of Caesar and this is where I should be tried*); A¹ is statement in v. 11b (*I appeal to Caesar*); and B is argumentation in vv. 10b–11a (*I have done the Jews no wrong, as you very well know. If then I am a wrongdoer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die; but if none of those things is true of which these men accuse me, no one can hand me over to them*). The structure shows that the main concern of the speech is to presents the reason for Paul's appeal to Caesar.

After this speech, Luke placed the speech of Festus to King Herod Agrippa II and Bernice (Ac 25,14–21), which in a more detailed manner presents Festus' viewpoint.

598 The Lukan Paul's answer to Festus presented in v. 11 strongly suggests that Paul was aware of the true meaning of Festus' proposal, which although contains the inference "Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and be tried there before me on these charges?" in fact puts Paul in extreme danger, as Luke informs the reader in Ac 25,3.

599 Luke's narrative in verse 12 may suggests Festus' lack of sufficient knowledge concerning legal procedures. The supposition is based on Festus' proposition to Paul (v. 9b), which contains unclear juridical elements. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 722. However, the majority of scholars opt for the interpretation that Festus conferred his council about advantages and disadvantages of approving Paul's appeal. A. Fernando, *Acts*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 593.

600 The different structure is presented by Soards (*The Speeches in Acts*, 119–120).

A.2 The Meaning of the Speech

Paul's defence during the trial before Festus is reduced in the Luke's narration to his final statement, where he declares his innocence of crimes against the Jewish Law, the Temple and Caesar, which means he cannot be guilty of any crime. The defence shows that the accusation against Paul during the trial before the Festus was the same as that made during the trial before Felix.⁶⁰¹ The only new element that appears here is the use of the word Caesar as a synonym for the Roman law.⁶⁰² The statement presented in Ac 25,8 should signal the end of Paul's trial before Festus, because all the accusations against him have been shown to be unfounded and the accusers lack any further evidence, as indicated in verse 7. The logical conclusion after Paul's speech is that he should be set free. However, for the same reason that Felix left Paul in custody for two years (Ac 24,27), Festus is about to send him back to Jerusalem for another trial before the Sanhedrin (Ac 25,9).⁶⁰³ Festus knows the legal procedures and that he cannot submit the Roman citizen, who wasn't found guilty of a crime either against Jewish Law or Roman law, to Jewish jurisdiction, even if he supervised the case, without Paul's agreement, which would put the whole matter in a new context favourable rather for Festus and Jews, but not for Paul. According to Luke, he does this in order to give favour to the Jews, as a sign of good will from a procurator who has just arrived. This is a very peculiar situation, in which the procurator of Judea is about to endanger the life of a Roman citizen

601 In Luke's narrative concept the trial before Festus starts at the point where the trial before Felix ended (see Paul's similar statement concerning his innocence). There is no presentation of the charge against Paul, nor a full account of Paul's defence, because both elements were presented in narration of Paul's trial before Felix. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 203.

602 It is possible that use of the word Caesar serves the Lukan narrative concept, since the Lukan Paul in his answer to Festus' proposition twice refers to the name of Caesar (v. 10a, v. 11b) and the beginning of verse 11 refers rather to offence against Roman law (Caesar) than the Jewish Law, because the latter was the subject of verse 10b.

603 In fact the intention of Festus is not really clear. In the light of Ac 25,9b it seems that he was about to submit Paul to the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin, who could pronounce the sentence, which in turn would have to be approved by the procurator. Probably, Luke consciously made the Lukan Festus express this puzzling proposition in order to show his negative disposition towards Paul and favouring of the Jews (Ac 25,9a), which so showing similar sentiments as Felix (Ac 24,27b). Concerning the negative presentation of both procurators, Luke is of the same opinion as Josephus, however the reasons for their presentations are different. Josephus writes about their bad disposition towards the Jews (Felix: *Bell.* 2.247–270, *Ant.* 20.137–182. Festus: *Bell.* 2.271–272, *Ant.* 20.182–200), but Luke writes about their bad disposition towards Paul (mean Jewish Christian). Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3457.

for the sake of his own advantage.⁶⁰⁴ Verse 9 creates a base for Paul's charge against Festus (Ac 25,10–11), which starts with an emphatic statement that he is subject to Caesar's judgement, something that should be perfectly clear to Festus, since Paul was a Roman citizen (Ac 25,10). The phrase "*I am standing before the tribunal of Caesar*" can simply be interpreted as referring to Festus as the legal judge, since he was the official representative of Caesar, however the context (v. 9) suggests rather Paul's direct rebuke to Festus, which gives the phrase the meaning of and indirect exposing Festus' unjust conduct as the judge, thus causing Paul to request trial before Caesar.⁶⁰⁵ In the second part of verse 10 Paul claims that he committed no offence against Jewish Law, which should also be known to Festus. Does Festus really have such familiarity with the Jewish Law and the Paul's case? This applies to Felix rather than to Festus, whose ignorance concerning the Jewish religious matter is mentioned in Ac 25,18–19. The meaning of Paul's statement can be determined from Luke's account of Festus' speech before King Herod Agrippa II (Ac 25,14–21). The speech does not contain any information regarding Festus' knowledge concerning Paul's case before the trial occurred, which is understandable if we consider that it is just the very beginning of his term of office (Ac 25,1.6).⁶⁰⁶ It makes it possible to interpret the saying of Paul as hidden ironical statement indirectly revealing Festus' lack of sufficient knowledge concerning the matter.⁶⁰⁷ In this

604 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 203.

605 Although the direct statement is not made since v. 11b, the phrase οὐ με δεῖ κρίνεσθαι—*I must be tried*, which recalled the two other *must* in Luke's narration (Ac 19,21, 23,11), strongly suggests the trial before Caesar. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 453.

606 Festus was informed about Paul's case from Jews in Jerusalem, but we can assume that it was nothing more than a one sided subjective story told in order to achieve a desired aim, which by any meaning cannot be the basis for Paul's note concerning Festus perfect knowledge. Festus most probably was not familiar with the Letter of Lysias or with a report concerning Paul's trial before Felix. Luke does not mention it, there is no reference to the letter or the report in his speech, and the short time sequences of events (three day in Caesarea; ten days in Jerusalem, one day in Caesarea) make it hardly possible for such a report to have been made. Keener thinks that Festus' knowledge comes from the records of the trial before Felix, however even if Festus known the report, could the report contain information of Paul guilt of any crime according to Jewish Law, and at the same time Felix left Paul in prison for two years without sentence? This contradiction would work against Felix, and because of that the report most probably does not contain this kind of information. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3461.

607 Although this tactic has a rather high level of risk, however it was used occasionally in ancient defence speeches. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3461. Paul's reason for using the tactic could be probably the unjust conduct of Festus (v. 9), who even after Paul's convincing defence (vv. 7–8) tried in some way release Paul to the Jewish jurisdiction.

context, the statement of Paul concerning his willingness to accept the penalty in case his crime is proven (v. 11), concerns a basic principle of Roman law.⁶⁰⁸ Paul is ready to accept even the most severe penalty justly pronounced, however any accusation against Paul will have to be proven. This is the condition that makes it impossible to pronounce a capital penalty upon him.⁶⁰⁹ The second part of verse 11, again directly exposes the fact that the accusations against Paul were ungrounded, which means that there is no reason for pronouncing a penalty or for prolonging the trial, this time in Jerusalem before the Sanhedrin.⁶¹⁰ Festus had no legal right to do so without Paul's agreement, and the agreement is not given (Ac 25,11c). Paul, exercising his Roman citizen's right, requests a trial in Rome, since he has sufficiently exposed the lack of a just attitude on the side of a local Roman official.⁶¹¹

After proving his innocence during the trial before Felix (Ac 24,10–21), which however did not definitively change Paul's situation, now during the trial before Festus (Ac 25,8–12) Paul has to uphold his rights as a Roman citizen. In this way, Luke presents the true reason for Paul's appeal to Caesar, which was result of unjust procedures undertaken by local officials of Rome.

A.3 The Function of the Speech

Paul's speech during the trial before Festus has not direct relation to the topical speech concerning the trial before Felix (Ac 24,1–21), it is however based on the account concerning the Felix's trial. The speech in Ac 25,8–12 is the first part of a unit (consisting of three topical speeches: Ac 25,8.10–11, 25,14–21 and 26,2–23.25–27.29) concerning Paul's speeches before Felix, the Roman procurator of Judea. There is logical continuity between the beginning of Paul's speech before Festus (Ac 25,8) and the end of the speech before Felix (Ac 24,21). The speech before Felix seems to be unfinished, due to the lack of the conclusion of Paul's arguments. Luke decided to interrupt the speech in order to present

608 Verse 11 concerns the Roman law.

609 The act of submitting Paul to Jewish jurisdiction in fact could mean death for him, what is strongly indicated by Luke's narration (Ac 25,2–3). Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 646.

610 This statement again contains Paul's rebuke to Festus, since Paul reminds the Roman official that he should be upholding Roman law instead of giving favour (χαρίσασθαι) to the Jews and to his private advantage but at the expense of a Roman citizen. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 452–454.

611 Although it was the right of a Roman citizen, not necessarily every request had to be favoured by the local officials, which means that Festus also had no obligation to grant Paul's appeal. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 723. In this context Luke's mention of Festus' consultation with his council, which may suggest his doubt concerning a legal reason for the Paul's appeal.

separately two stages of Paul's trial before the Roman procurators.⁶¹² In the speech before Felix, Luke concentrates on proving that the accusation by the Jews is not supported by any facts, which makes Paul innocent.⁶¹³ In the second speech Luke concentrates on a much more sensitive topic, namely, the problem of respecting the right of a Roman citizen by the Roman procurator.

The function of the speech is to present an account of the circumstances that lead to Paul's appeal to Caesar. Two years after the conspiracy against Paul and his planned assassination, Paul's opponents again plan to kill him (Ac 25,2–4). The opportunity came when the new procurator Festus takes office, since he was less experienced and less familiar with Jewish matters than Felix, as well he was in great need of earning the goodwill of the Jewish establishment, giving a greater chance that the Sanhedrin's request be favoured.⁶¹⁴ Festus rightly refuses the petition for the extradition of Paul from Caesarea to Jerusalem, suggesting a trial in Caesarea (Ac 25,5). The trial finishes with Paul's successful defence, which should be followed by the right verdict, however surprisingly Festus suggests a further trial before him, but this time in Jerusalem (Ac 25,7–8). These two decisions of Festus (Ac 25,4–5,9) contradict each other and indicate some critical change in Festus' approach to the case, which Luke in a euphemistic manner indicates in Ac 25,9. The danger of the new reality was immediately recognised by Paul, who not only notes the unjust conduct of the procurator but also in a strong indirect manner exposes the wrongdoings of the Roman official (Ac 25,10–11). Without the chance for just treatment before local Roman juridical system, in order to save his life, Paul using his rights as Roman citizen applied for trial before Caesar. Luke clearly indicates that Paul was forced by circumstances to appeal to Caesar, however Luke gently indicates that all these socio-political circumstances are devices by which Jesus' command will be realised (Ac 23,11).⁶¹⁵

612 The first stage of the narration about the Paul's trial before the procurators concerns the matter of Paul's innocence (Ac 24,1–27), the second stage concerns violation of a Roman citizen's rights by Roman officials.

613 The trial before Felix is part of Luke's narrative, which on the one hand convinces the reader of Paul's innocence (Ac 24,13), and on the other indicates the unjust attitude of the procurator, who for his own advantage ignored the truth he has fully recognised (Ac 24,22).

614 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3450.

615 This explains Paul's apology to Jews living in Rome (Ac 28,19). Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 724–726.

B *The First Speeches of Festus (Ac 25, 14–21)*

The first speech of Festus is given only to King Herod Agrippa II and his sister.⁶¹⁶ However, the lack of an *exordium* containing the normal form of address gives the speech the aspect of an oral report rather than the speech. The information contained in the report corresponds to Luke's narrative in Ac 25,1–12.⁶¹⁷ Thus raising the question of the purpose and function of presenting the same narrative in different form? An analysis of the speech helps us to find the message hidden by Luke in Festus' report.

The text of Ac 25, 14–21

¹⁴ There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix. ¹⁵ When I came to Jerusalem, the Jewish chief priest and the elders laid an information, and ask condemnation for him. ¹⁶ I told them that it was not the custom of the Romans to hand over anyone until the accused had met the accusers face to face and had been given an opportunity to make his defence concerning the charge laid against him. ¹⁷ So when they met here, without loss of time I took my seat on the tribunal the very next day, and ordered the man to be brought before me. ¹⁸ But, when his accusers came forward, they brought no accusation concerning wrong-doing that I had expected. ¹⁹ They had certain issues of dispute with him about their own religion and about certain Jesus, who had died, but whom Paul declared to be alive. ²⁰ Being at loss in their debate, I asked [him] if he wish to go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged about these [issues]. ²¹ But Paul had

⁶¹⁶ Herod Agrippa II (AD 27–92/100) ruled the kingdom of Chalcis (AD 48–53), the tetrarch of Philip and the kingdom of Lysanias (AD 53–92/100), some parts of Galilee, Lybia and Peraea (since AD 55) with the approval of Rome (the emperors Claudius and Nero). In AD 50, seven years after his father's death, Agrippa received from Claudius the territory of Chalcis, which three years later he exchanged for Gaulanitis, Abila, Bateneia, and Trachonitis. Later (AD 56), from Nero he received Tiberias, Tarichaea and lands west of the Sea of Galilee. He was a loyal client-king of Rome, which ensured the safety of his reign and made his name (Marcus Julius Agrippa) known in Rome. By a decree of Claudius, Herod became the curator of the Temple in Jerusalem with the right to appoint the High Priest (*Bell.* 2.220–632, *Ant.* 20,159). Julia Bernice (AD 28—unknown) was a sister of Herod Agrippa II, who after the death of her husband (Herod the king of Chalcis in AD 48) and separation from her second husband Polemon, king of Cilicia, was living with her brother. She held the title queen. After the Jewish-Roman war, she had a relationship with Titus (in the mid-70s), however Titus was not allowed to marry her.

⁶¹⁷ Generally it is accepted that Luke has no access to the speech of Festus to the King Agrippa, and because of that he created the speech-report based on the narrative in Ac 25,1–12 and according to his narrative purpose. Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 240.

invoked to be kept for the decision of the emperor, then I ordered to be kept him until I send him back to Caesar.

B.1 The Structural Analysis of the Speech

Festus' speech to Agrippa II and Bernice is a presentation of the matter concerning Paul's case, which in fact takes a form of an oral report and it contains a résumé of the narrative presented in Ac 24,1–25,15.⁶¹⁸ Festus first informs them that Felix left the case of Paul without any final solution (v. 14), which is taken from Ac 24,27. Next, Festus refers to the action of the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem, who asked him to sentence Paul to death based on their accusation (v. 15).⁶¹⁹ This does not correspond to Ac 25,3 where the Jews insisted that Festus send Paul back to Jerusalem for his trial. In addition, Ac 25,15 does not contain mention of the plot against Paul, which is included in Ac 25,3–4. To this request, Festus responds correctly, informing them that it was impossible for Romans to sentence someone without a trial (v. 16), since in this way he demonstrates to king Agrippa, his "*strong commitment to Roman standards of justice*".⁶²⁰ This information is similar in meaning to the account in Ac 25,4–5, but different in form and context.⁶²¹ Further information concerns the trial in Caesarea (v. 17), which corresponds with the narrative in Ac 25,5–6 in details concerning the prompt treatment of the case. Next, Festus reports that the accusers failed to convince him of Paul's guilt (v. 18), what seems to be new information that is not found in the account of Ac 24,7–10, where Paul's innocence is not explicitly pronounced by Festus but it is recorded in Luke's narrative (Ac 25,7).⁶²² In the end, Festus was only able to conclude that the accusation concerned matters referring to the Jewish religious controversies (v. 19) with

618 Festus' speech in Ac 25,14–21 shows many similarities to the written report of Lysias (Ac 23,26–30). The similarities lie in its official tone and informative character. The term ἀνατίθημι—*declare, refer to* takes here meaning of report. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 426; H.W. Tajra, *The Trial of St. Paul. A Juridical Exegesis of the Second Half of the Acts of the Apostles*, WUNT 2–35 (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1989), 76–89.

619 Fitzmyer rightly points that in Ac 25,15 the accent is put on the authority's request to sentence Paul to death, rather than request a trial (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 740–750).

620 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 652–653.

621 In Ac 25,4–5, Festus in fact refused to send Paul to Jerusalem and decided in favour of a trial in Caesarea, which indicates a more personal approach. However, in Ac 25,16 the more general approach is used since Festus' focus concerns a proper legal and just trial. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 995–996.

622 In his report Festus agrees with Paul (Ac 25,8), which does not correspond exactly with the narrative section Ac 25,8–12. However, such presentation serves the self-serving purpose of the report. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 728–730.

which he was not familiar.⁶²³ This information is also absent from the narration Ac 25,7–10, however, in Ac 25,20 it seems to be offered as a reason for Festus' question concerning the possibility of Paul's trial before the Sanhedrin.⁶²⁴ Festus' presentation of the matter is in conflict with Luke's version in Ac 25,9 where a different reason is given.⁶²⁵ The last item of information concerns Paul's refusal of Festus' proposal by his appeal for a trial before Caesar (v. 21).⁶²⁶ This agrees with the version in Ac 25,10–12, however the reason for Paul's appeal is here omitted. As a result Paul remains in prison until being sent for his trial before Caesar (v. 21).⁶²⁷

This oral report, which in Luke's narration takes shape of the speech, presents Roman's official point of view concerning Paul's case. The report consists of four parts, the first part (Ac 25,14–16) presents the necessary historical background; the second part (Ac 25,17–19) presents in the form of a summary narrative concerning the trial; the third part (Ac 25,20–21a) presents Festus' unsuccessful attempt to solve the problem; and the fourth part (Ac 25,21b)

623 Here the resurrection of Jesus is mentioned in particular. Consequently, from the interrogation before the Sanhedrin, the matter being to change from a general accusation concerning Paul's wrong-doing against the nation, the Law and the Temple (Ac 21,28) to the particular matter concerning the Christian claim that Jesus was raised from the dead (Ac 23,6, 24,14–15, 25,19). Festus' report exposes this controversy strictly referring to Christianity and Judaism. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 426.

624 Fitzmyer interprets verse 20 differently. In his opinion that "the governor could not hand over his jurisdiction in a capital case to a third party; so his question does not mean that he was willing to have Paul judged in a trial before the Sanhedrin, but only that he himself was willing to hear the case in Jerusalem with the Sanhedrin as a *consilium*" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 751). Although this interpretation better fits to Ac 25,9 where *κριθῆναι ἐπ' ἐμοῦ*—*be judge before me* strongly suggests Festus jurisdiction during the possible trial in Jerusalem, however Ac 25,20 says about *βούλοιο πορεύεσθαι εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα κακεῖ κρίνεσθαι περὶ τούτων*—*he would be willing to go to Jerusalem to be tried there on this issue*, where the authority in charge of Paul's possible trial is not mentioned explicitly. Next, the authorities accusing Paul in Caesarea (Ac 25,15) will be also the authorities serving Festus as the *consilium* during possible trial in Jerusalem, what can be expected if we consider the membership of the accusers during the trial in Caesarea (Ac 25,1–8). Lastly, Festus wants to present himself before the King Agrippa as the just procurator, who wishes to solve Jewish issues within Jewish community.

625 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 207.

626 In this way Festus points to Paul as the source of his problem. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 654.

627 Since the time of Caesar Augustus the name of Caesar was used as the title for his successors. Here, the text concerns Caesar Nero (AD 37–68) who ruled as emperor of Rome in AD 54–68.

presents the situation of Paul. The speech-report has neither a proper introduction nor an ending.

B.2 The Meaning of the Speech

The first speech of Festus (Ac 25,14–21) refers to what Luke already has presented in Ac 24,1–27, but the specific way of presenting the information by Festus indicates a hidden meaning, which the audience (the King Agrippa II) should recognise. In v. 14, Festus declares that Felix neglected his duty by keeping in prison for two years a man without any confirmed accusation.⁶²⁸ The current problem for Festus is the result of Felix's lack of responsibility. In v. 15, Festus says that the condemnation of the man was so important for the Jewish officials in Jerusalem that it was one of the first requests they presented to the new procurator. Contrary to the narrative in Ac 25,2–3, here the Jews request the sentence of death for Paul. In v. 16, Festus presents himself as a Roman official who precisely follows the Roman law, and because of that he would not condemn anybody without a just trial. As a responsible procurator, Festus immediately started the trial against Paul as soon as his accusers came from Jerusalem to Caesarea (v. 17). However, the accusers (v. 18) failed to present an accusation, which would be of possible interest to Festus (issues that directly concern Roman law).⁶²⁹ Consequently, Festus found Paul not guilty of the accusations. In v. 19, Festus says that the accusations concern exclusively religious matters, with a special focus on the problem concerning the resurrection of Jesus, however for Festus this problem was matter of ζήτημα—*issue, question, dispute* and not a matter of legal issue.⁶³⁰ In v. 20, Festus confesses his ignorance concerning the Jewish religious problems, as a result of which he is unable to investigate the case, and inclines him to think that it would be more appropriate to subordinate the Roman citizen to a trial before the Sanhedrin.⁶³¹ Again, Luke in the words of Festus' hidden message that can be differently understood by the readers and by the addresser (the King Agrippa). After reading Ac 25,8–11, the reader knows that from this point Festus embellishes the

628 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 728.

629 Here, indirectly and in a negative way, Festus confirms that Paul did not offend against Roman law. The statement is similar to the statement in the Lysias' Letter (Ac 23,29).

630 In this way Luke again strongly underlines that the controversy between Paul and the Jews concerned the resurrection of Jesus. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 429; Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 997.

631 Even if we did not take to consideration Luke's information concerning Festus' reason for his action (Ac 25,9), the impression would remain that Festus wanted just to free himself from the problem by neglecting his duty to protect a Roman citizen. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 429.

facts, and now he is using ignorance as his official excuse for the unjust attempt. Since Festus is speaking to King Agrippa, he wants to present himself as the procurator who respects his limitation concerning Jewish matters, and for that reason is about to submit even a Roman citizen to the power of the Sanhedrin. In the last sentence of the speech (v. 21) Festus says that Paul appealed to the Caesar, what obliged Festus to keep him in prison until his appeal would be heard. In a diplomatic way Festus informs the King that Paul rejected his proposal, however he says nothing about Paul's reason and argumentation for such a decision,⁶³² what most probably influenced King Agrippa's evaluation of Paul as troublemaker for the procurator. Indication that Festus did everything what Paul requested serves to build-up the image of Festus as the procurator, who protects the rights of Romans citizens, since the King was also the Roman citizen.

B.3 The Function of the Speech

The first speech of Festus is the spoken report of a Roman official concerning the legal case of a Roman citizen who although was not found guilty of any crime against Roman law, however he was in severe disagreement with his accusers concerning a Jewish religious controversy referring to the resurrection of Jesus. The speech-report is a typical self-serving speech, where the main aim is to present the facts in way that best suits the interest of the speaker, which here refers to Festus who tries to present himself to King Agrippa in the best possible way. This speech has a progressive character, presenting the official statement of the procurator, which is based on the Luke's narrative presented in Ac 25,1–12. The speech of Paul (Ac 25,8,10–11) shows the trial from Paul's perspective, which explains the Paul's reason for appealing to Caesar. The speech of Festus is the second one in a section of three topical speeches concerning Paul's trial before the procurator of Judea, and it presents the trial and its circumstances from Festus' perspective, which presents the problematic issue in the case of Paul. The issue refers to the fact that Paul was not found guilty of any crime against Roman law, but he was harshly accused by Jewish authorities about one religious matter, namely about proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus. However, this problem was recognised by Festus as constituting no legal case. It indicates the main function of the speech, which is to explain that the procurator of Judea, the legal Roman official in charge of juridical matters, did not find Paul guilty of accusations charged against him.

632 It was the incompetence of the official Roman governors that made Paul appeal to Caesar in order to save his life rather than a desire to fulfil the prophecy (Ac 23,11). Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 751.

Since the readers are familiar with the narrative (Ac 25,1–12) preceding Festus' speech, the simple comparison of these two accounts, similar in subject but different in its presentation, presents another possible function of the speech. In his report Festus says that the reason for his attempt to submit Paul to the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin was his ignorance concerning Jewish religious matters.⁶³³ However, the narrative concerning Paul's speech before Festus gives a different reason (Ac 25,9) for Festus' proposal. While Festus' excuse in Ac 25,20 does not explain the reason for Paul's appeal to Caesar, Luke's narrative in Ac 25,9 presents clearly Paul's reason for the appeal. In this way, Luke puts the responsibility for Paul's appeal on the side of the Roman official, who acted for his own advantage. As it was in case of the trial before Felix, when the personal interests of the judge decided Paul's fate for two years, now also the trial before Festus forced Paul to seek for justice in Rome, so determining his fate for another two years. It indicates another function of the speech, which is to expose the weakness of the Roman judicial system in Judea province, where personal interest is of greater value than the service of justice.

C *The Speech of Paul before King Herod Agrippa II (Ac 26, 2–29)*

In Luke's narrative this speech is placed after the second speech of Festus (Ac 25,24–27) and it is given to the same audience as the second speech of Festus, but Paul addresses in particular King Herod Agrippa II (v. 2).⁶³⁴ In this speech, the longest of the speeches concerning Paul's imprisonment, Paul neither answers questions nor does he simply deliver an apology, but he gives an account of his life to prove that the prophecy of Scripture has been fulfilled (v. 22).⁶³⁵ The future of Paul has already been decided (Ac 25,12), so there is no need to fight any longer to save his own life, and Paul uses the occasion to deliver his kerygma (Ac 26,29). However, Festus speaks about an "interrogation" before King Agrippa (Ac 25,26) and also King Agrippa and Paul speak about "defence" (Ac 26,1–3), which strongly suggests that in Luke's narrative structure the speech is intended as a part of Paul's trial before Festus (the third topical speech). It gives the speech a kind of peculiar function, which can be determined from analysis of the text.

633 This reason seems to be acceptable due to the fact that Festus has just arrived in Judea.

634 We categorised the second speech of Festus as the structural speech, since it serves as introduction to Paul's speech before the king Agrippa.

635 The only apologetic issue, which is treated by Paul, concerns the resurrection of Jesus, the Messiah (Ac 26,7–8.22–23). Festus' accusation and Paul's apology in Ac 26,24–25 do not concern legal issues.

The text of Ac 26, 2–29

² Concerning all the charges brought against me by Jews, the King Agrippa, I have been considered to be blessed, because today I am about to make my defence before you, ³ especially because you are acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. I beg you therefore to give me a patient hearing. ⁴ From my youth, the manner of my life, which I spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews. ⁵ They have known for a long time, that according to the strictest sect of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee, if they are willing to testify. ⁶ And now I am standing trial for the hope of the promise given by God to our fathers. ⁷ The promise which our twelve tribes hope to see fulfilled, by earnest service to God night and day. And for this hope, I am being accused by Jews, O king. ⁸ Why is it recognized incredible among you if God raises the dead? ⁹ I myself, once thought that it is necessary to oppose in every way the name of Jesus of Nazareth, ¹⁰ and actually I did so in Jerusalem. Acting on the authority of the chief priests, I myself threw many of the saints into prison, and when they were being put to death I cast my a voting-pebble against them. ¹¹ Often in all the synagogues I punished them trying to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities. ¹² Thus I was travelling to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. ¹³ At midday, on my way, I saw O king, a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, which shone all around me and those travelling with me. ¹⁴ We all fell to the ground, and then I heard a voice saying to me in Hebrew language: Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads. ¹⁵ I said: Who are you, Lord? And the Lord said: I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting, ¹⁶ but rise and stand your feet, for I have appeared to you to appoint you a servant and a witness of those things which you have already seen, and those which I will yet appear to you. ¹⁷ I will delivering you from your nation and from the Gentiles, to whom I am send you, ¹⁸ in order to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God that that they may receive the forgiveness for their sins and a lot amongst those who are sanctified by faith in me. ¹⁹ After that, the king Agrippa, I did not become disobedient the heavenly vision. ²⁰ Consequently, first in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and then through the whole region of Judea, and to the Gentiles, I was declaring that they should repent and turn to God and perform deeds worthy their repentance. ²¹ For this reason the Jews seized me in the Temple, and made attempts to kill me. ²² However, to this very day I have received help from God, so I have stood bearing testimony to

low and high alike, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass.²³ That the Messiah must suffer, and that by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to the nation and to the Gentiles.²⁴ While Paul was making this defence, Festus called out loudly: you are insane Paul, your great learning is driving you mad.²⁵ He replied: the noblest Festus! I am not mad, but I am speaking true and rational words.²⁶ For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly, since I am certain that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner.²⁷ King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you believe.²⁸ But Agrippa said to Paul: A little more, and you persuade me that I am Christian! Paul answered: I pray to God that whether soon or late not only you but also all who hear me this day become just what I am myself, except for these chains.

C.1 The Structural Analysis of the Speech

The speech is given in the meeting chamber in the presence of Festus, Herod Agrippa II and Bernice, with the Tribunes and notables of Caesarea, but Paul addresses King Agrippa in person (Ac 26,2.7.19.27). It contains several references to the king (Ac 26,2.7.19.27), which supports the consideration that although other persons are present, the speech is particularly addressed to the king Herod Agrippa II. The speech is an example of forensic rhetoric (with the exception of the omission of a *probatio*) and it contains language and style worthy of a speech delivered before a king.⁶³⁶ The speech begins with an *exordium* (Ac 26,2–3) containing a *captatio benevolentiae*, which concerns only the king.⁶³⁷ It is followed by the *narratio* (Ac 26,4–21) with an extensive presentation of Paul's life. In the *narratio* there are three units referring to specific periods of Paul's life: Ac 26,4–11 refers to Paul's life in Jerusalem; Ac 26,12–18 refers to Paul's conversion and life in Damascus; Ac 26,19–23 refers to Paul's mission activities. After the *narratio* there follows the *propositio* (Ac 26,22–23), which should be followed by a *probatio*. However, the *probatio* as a coherent unit is missing from this speech. Witherington presents two possible explanations for this. As a first possibility he points to Ac 22–25 as being a *probatio*, which, since it has already been given, is not necessary to repeat it. As a second possible explanation he suggests that the proofs, although they do not form a

636 Long points to many elements of the style of the speech, which single it out for its masterful rhetoric. W.R. Long, *The Trial of Paul in the Book of Acts: History, Literary, and Theological Considerations* (Brown University, 1982, PhD diss.), 237–239.

637 Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*, 122–126.

unit, are presented in several places in the *narratio*.⁶³⁸ However, in our opinion the speech lacks a *probatio* because it is not a strict apologetic speech (in its form and contents), in which Paul must prove his innocence with regard to any accusations.⁶³⁹ In this speech, Paul gives an account of his life (*narratio*) and at the same time presents arguments that the words of the prophets concerning the realisation of the God's promise (Jesus, the Messiah) were fulfilled (Ac 26,27). The life of Paul (since his experience at Damascus) is fully dedicated to proclaiming that God fulfils His promise. Instead of a *probatio*, the *propositio* is followed by a *refutatio*, which contains Paul's short reply to Festus' statement, but the reply is addressed to King Agrippa and not to Festus (Ac 26,25–26). The speech ends with a *peroratio* (Ac 26,27.29), in which Paul express his wishes concerning Agrippa's conversion (believe in Jesus as the Messiah) in the future.⁶⁴⁰ The speech is interrupted twice: in Ac 26,24 by Festus, and in Ac 26,28 by Agrippa, which changes the speech (Ac 26,1–23) into a kind of dialogue (Ac 26,24–29).⁶⁴¹ Both interruptions, however, serve to carry along the development of the speech.

C.2 The Meaning of the Speech

Verse 1 shows that although Festus was the one who should allow Paul to speak, in fact it is Agrippa who gives him permits for his defence. It indicates that a main addressee of the speech (from the perspective of Luke's Paul) will be Agrippa, who is in charge of Paul's interrogation, since he is the one who will give an authoritative response to Festus (Ac 25,26) concerning Paul's innocence or guilt (v. 31).

Verse 2, which starts the *exordium* of the speech (vv. 2–3), contains two items of information considered by Paul fortunate. The first is that Paul defends himself against all accusations made by the Jews, but not against any charges by the Roman authorities, which means that according to Roman law he is innocent. The second is that Paul considers himself fortunate because finally he can defend himself before the king of the Jews. This information may suggest that, unlike the ill will of the Jewish crowd and the Sanhedrin or the ignorance of Roman authorities, he is now finally in the presence of a competent person,

638 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 736–738.

639 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3492.

640 Winter presents different structure. See B.W. Winter, "Official Proceedings and the Forensic Speeches in Acts 24–26," 329–330. See also some proposals on structure discussed by Keener (*Acts*, vol. 4, 3492–3494).

641 For this reason some scholars limit the speech to Ac 26,2–23. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 440.

before whom he makes his defence (as is made explicit in v. 3).⁶⁴² Paul's use of ἀπολογεῖσθαι has little to do with the content of the speech, what may suggest that the real purpose of using the term is not to indicate the nature of the speech but to amplify the *captatio benevolentiae* by recognising King Agrippa as the right judge. In context of verse 3, Paul's words may contain considerable allusions to the incompetence of Festus.

Verse 3 gives an explanation for Paul's statement concerning his good fortune. Herod Agrippa II knows the Jewish customs and is familiar with the many issues causing controversy in Jewish society and within Judaism itself, what includes also the problem concerning the sect called Nazarenes.⁶⁴³ Paul underlines that Herod Agrippa II is an expert in regards to all Jewish customs and to all Jewish controversies.⁶⁴⁴

Verses 4–21 form the *narratio* of the speech, which starts with an account of Paul's life until his experience at Damascus (Ac 26,4–11). Verse 4 shows Paul as a public person well known among the Jews in Jerusalem where he was living from his youth until the event at Damascus. It indirectly informs the king as well as the readers that Paul was not born in Jerusalem, thus making him a Diaspora Jew.⁶⁴⁵ Probably for this reason Paul uses three temporal qualifiers (*from youth*; *from the beginning*; and in verse 5 *from the start*), which stresses that he grew up in Palestinian Judaism, attested by his use of “*my nation*” as an indicator of his identity as the true Jew.

In verse 5 Paul talks of belonging to the Pharisees, what naturally gives him the image of a pious and truly devout Jew. However, Paul's past as a zealous Jew was no longer recognised by Jews in Jerusalem, after the event at Damascus. Even Paul himself refers to his life as a Pharisee, views it as a past event (using

642 The “competent person” means that the king of the Jews (Agrippa II) is hearing the Jew (Paul) in matters concerning Jewish religious controversy. B.W. Winter, “Official Proceedings and the Forensic Speeches in Acts 24–26,” 329.

643 In fact Paul's does not explain Christian thought to Agrippa (contrary to his encounter with Felix in Ac 24,24–25), but gives an account of his life not only explaining the reason for his living according to the teaching of Jesus, but also presents Jesus and his movement as the fulfilment of the God's promises given to the nation. C.J.A. Hickling, “The Portrait of Paul in Acts 26,” in *Les Actes des Apôtres: Traditions, rédaction, théologie*, ed. J. Kremer (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979), 499–503.

644 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 432.

645 Note the differences in Paul's self-presentation in Ac 22,3. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 756.

the aorist tense of ζάω).⁶⁴⁶ For this reason Paul reveals his doubts about the Jews' readiness to look favourably on his past.

Verse 6 indicates that Paul's hope concerning the fulfilment of God's promise is the reason for his trials in general (before the Sanhedrin in Ac 23,1–11 and the Roman authorities in Ac 24,1–23) and this interrogation in particular.⁶⁴⁷ Although verse 6 does not say which of God's promise is referred to here, however the previous narrative concerning Paul's trials (Ac 23,6, 24,14–15, 25,19) as well as the following narrative (vv. 8–9) name God's promise as referring to the resurrection of the dead.⁶⁴⁸ Since the topic of God's promise is further developed in vv. 8–9, no need is seen for explicit exposition of the meaning of the promise (the resurrection of the dead), rather Paul's mention of his Pharisee past in verse 5 may serve in Luke's narrative strategy as a connecting link between the Pharisee sect recognised within mainstream Judaism and Paul the leader of the Nazarene sect not recognised by mainstream Judaism.⁶⁴⁹

In verse 7 Paul continues the topic of God's promise, which is still not yet clearly defined for the King, but now is presented as something expected by all zealous Jews. The realisation of God's promise is the hope of the whole of Israel, which is shared also by Paul, as the phrase "*our twelve tribes*" indicates. At this stage of developing the theme, Paul's teaching about the promise in verse 7 must refer to two aspects of resurrection understood as an eschatological event.⁶⁵⁰ The first aspect concerns individual resurrection, the meaning which will be directly indicated in verse 8 and which is accepted and counted as a critical issue by the Pharisees, but not by whole of Israel, particularly the Sadducees. The second aspect concerns the resurrection of Israel understood in its political sense, which is shared by the whole of Israel, including most

646 In Ac 23,6 Paul uses the present tense of ζάω in the narrative concerning his background as a Pharisee, because there the matter in question is faith in the resurrection, which Paul shares with Pharisees, even after the event at Damascus. However, here Paul is talking about practising the way of living characteristic of Pharisees, which Paul discontinued after the event at Damascus. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 1003.

647 Note that topic of God's promise is the theme of the first (Ac 13,7) and the last (Ac 26,6) major speech of Paul. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3500.

648 The meaning of the promise stays unclear until v. 8 where it is explained in the form of a rhetorical question that the promise concerns the resurrection (2 Macc 7,9, Dan 12,13). Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 756.

649 This relatively new promise of God, which has been current since the time of the Maccabees (2 Macc 7,9), most probably is the reason for recording the speech before king Agrippa (in particular) and all Paul's speeches found in the narrative referring to his imprisonment. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 432.

650 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3500.

probably Paul. However, the latter is not the aspect chosen by Paul (v. 8), although it could have been more acceptable to King Agrippa.⁶⁵¹ Before Paul presents his understanding of God's promise, he officially claims that the hope for the realisation of the promise is the direct reason for the Jews' accusations against him.

Finally in verse 8 Paul indicates his understanding of God's promise mentioned in vv. 6–7 as the resurrection of the dead. This verse is a rhetorical question whose purpose is not to elicit an answer but to prepare the ground for next part of the speech. This question is addressed to those who do not believe in the resurrection of the dead, and the king Agrippa is probably one of them, as Ac 26,28 seems to suggest.⁶⁵²

The following part of the *narratio* (Ac 26, 9–11) gives an account of Paul's life as a persecutor of Jesus' followers, which serves as the negative example presented to those, who are mentioned in verse 8. In verse 9 Paul confesses that there was period in his life when he was convinced of the error of the Christian movement and this conviction led him to active opposition to those who believed in name of Jesus the Nazarene. Paul does not give a reason for his conviction, however verse 8, which takes a preparatory character, indicates that the reason may concern the problem of Jesus' resurrection. It is impossible to think that Paul as a Pharisee did not believe in the resurrection of the body as general idea, which gives strong support to the idea that Paul refused to believe that God by raising Jesus from the dead proved His movement to be of a divine nature and mainstream Judaism to be wrong.⁶⁵³

Verse 10 provides information concerning Paul's persecution of the Christians in Jerusalem. His actions were authorised by the High Priests of the Temple and it lead him to arrest Christians in order to bring them for judgment before the Sanhedrin. In some cases Paul voted for capital punishment.⁶⁵⁴ This description shows that the persecution of the Christians in Jerusalem was

651 Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, vol. 2, 319–320.

652 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 432.

653 This means that at this stage of his life Paul did not recognise the Christian movement as being a work of God. On the contrary, he considers the Christian movement to be something within Judaism that Judaism cannot accept or tolerate. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 741.

654 The literal meaning of the phrase τε αὐτῶν κατήνεγκα ψῆφον—I cast my pebble against suggests that Paul was a voting member of the Sanhedrin (which is attested nowhere else) and that he voted for the death penalty. This interpretation serves to put responsibility for the persecution of the Christians on the side of the Sanhedrin, what seems to be Luke's purpose. However, elsewhere Paul is pictured as a person who agreed with the persecution of the Christians and actively took part in it, but he is not presented as being a member of the Sanhedrin (Ac 7,58, 8,1, 22,20). Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3506–3508.

not a separate act or an impulsive action of the crowd but it was an action authorised and planned by the Sanhedrin. Verse 10 suggests that Paul could be a member of the Sanhedrin, but such an interpretation is difficult to maintain because of his young age, and Jewish tradition concerning the members of the Sanhedrin. However, if Paul was not a member of the Sanhedrin, as someone well-educated in the Law, he may have worked for the Sanhedrin as an expert and agent in cases concerning the Christians. In particular cases Paul may have consciously interpreted Scripture and the facts in ways that were unfavourable to the Christians.⁶⁵⁵ This last interpretation may be supported by the fact that he was an active oppressor who worked in the field (as verse 11 indicates) rather than in the court.⁶⁵⁶

Verse 11 gives more detail about Paul's activities as an oppressor. The persecution in Jerusalem was not limited to private houses but included also the Synagogues, which indicates that followers of Jesus were still linked to Judaism as a religious system and were recognised still as Jews. Such action was undertaken even outside Jerusalem in other cities, which indicates rather systematic action than something spontaneous. The way of persecution was to find Christian believers and to punish them in order to make them renounce their faith in Jesus as the Messiah.⁶⁵⁷ In case of refusal they were imprisoned and put on a trial (v. 10). All this was done by Paul out of hatred for the blasphemous belief that Jesus is the Messiah.⁶⁵⁸

Verse 12 is the beginning of a new unit (vv. 12–18) within Paul's speech, in which the event at Damascus is presented.⁶⁵⁹ Verse 12 indicates that Paul, under the circumstances described in vv. 10–11, went to Damascus to search out Christians.⁶⁶⁰ His action was authorised by the High Priests of the Temple in

655 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 433–434.

656 Paul's activities are described by four kind of action: to shut up; to give approval; to force; to pursue (Ac 26,10–11). Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 1005–1006.

657 Paul's presentation of his persecution activities indicates that, he and those for whom he was working with handled the problem as one strictly within Judaism, as dangerous but rather temporary, and they did not count it an antagonistic or divisive movement within Judaism.

658 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 1007.

659 This is a third account concerning Paul's conversion (Ac 9,1–9, 22,6–11), which in general terms agrees with the others, although it contains some minor discrepancies as result of Paul's interpretation of the events while considering the circumstances in which the account is given. Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 242.

660 We understand the words ἐν οἷς as having a circumstantial reference (as in Lk 12,1), but it is also possible to take it with a temporal reference (as in Ac 24,18). See Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 500.

Jerusalem.⁶⁶¹ Because the speech is delivered before the king Herod Agrippa II, the fact of authorisation of Paul's action is emphasised in order to show that he was not acting on his own behalf.⁶⁶²

Verse 13 contains an account of the revelation on the road to Damascus. The account contains many specific details.⁶⁶³ Light is reference that implies theophany. The difference between the "light from heaven" and the light of the sun is underlined to maintain that it was not a natural event. The mention that the light affected not only Paul but also his companions indicates that the event was not a private, inner revelation, but had a public character.

Verse 14 contains a description of the revelation, which is similar to the account in Ac 22,6–11, but also contains three new details.⁶⁶⁴ First, whereas the whole company fell to the ground, it was only Paul who heard the voice. This stresses that the event was apprehended by the whole company. Second, the voice speaks in Hebrew (probably Aramaic is intended) using Paul's Hebrew name Saul. This indicates a particular character of the revelation, which although it had a public character was addressed to an individual. The mention of Paul's persecution of Jesus may be Luke's deliberate theological statement that persecution of the Jesus' believers means acting against Jesus Himself. Third, the voice uses a rhetorical question and a Greek proverb to explain to Paul that it is useless for him to resist.⁶⁶⁵ The exposition of Paul's resistance to Jesus on the one hand indicates the power of the divine and on the other hand serves to underline a divine decision concerning Paul rather than his own deliberation.⁶⁶⁶

661 The plural "High Priests" according to Fitzmyer should be interpreted in the light of Ac 22,5 where the High Priest and his council is mentioned (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 758). The term, according to Keener, refers to the family of the High Priest (*Acts*, vol. 4, 3510–3511). The term, according to Witherington III, means that although one High Priest held the office, however there was more than one High Priest, past and present with influence or power (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 741).

662 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3511.

663 The mention of the time of day is missing in the account of Ac 9,2. Other details are mentioned but with some stylistic variations. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 435.

664 At the same time, some details found in Ac 22,6–16 are omitted here. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 665–666.

665 The proverb was common in the Hellenistic world but it has never been found in Aramaic writings. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 501.

666 F.S. Spencer, "Acts and Modern Literary Approaches," in *Ancient Literary Setting*, vol. 1 of *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, ed. B.W. Winter and A.D. Clarke (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 227.

Verse 15 concerns the manifestation of the identity of the voice.⁶⁶⁷ Paul, in a manner similar to Moses (Ex 3,13–14), asks for the identity of speaker. Immediately he received an answer that Jesus, whom he is persecuting, is Himself speaking to him. Paul did not believe that Jesus was raised by God (Ac 26,9), but now he must face a living Jesus.⁶⁶⁸ As Moses met the living God on Mount Horeb, similarly Paul on the road to Damascus met the living Jesus.⁶⁶⁹ The persecution of Jesus is again mentioned, amplifying the idea that Paul is fighting against Jesus because he persecutes his followers.

Verse 16 is the beginning of a paragraph (vv. 16–18) containing an extensive description of the mission Paul was appointed to undertake.⁶⁷⁰ The order for Paul to get up from the ground is an act of elevating him to a new status.⁶⁷¹ Paul was chosen by Jesus for two purposes, where the first one refers to the Paul–Jesus relation, namely Paul will be at the service of Jesus. The second purpose concerns Paul's duty as the servant of the Lord, which is to give witness to all things that he has experienced, namely meeting with the living Jesus, as well as to many other things that will be revealed to him in the future.⁶⁷²

Verse 17 contains two new details concerning Paul's appointment. The first one concerns Jesus' promise of protection for His servant and eyewitness against Jews and Gentiles who will not accept his witness.⁶⁷³ It indicates that the task Paul is appointed to, on the one hand includes risk and danger but on the other hand is protected by divine power.⁶⁷⁴ The second detail refers to the field of Paul's service, which concerns all people described here as Jews (those

667 This part of the event remains constant in all three accounts, with an exception in the addition in Ac 22,8 the Nazarene of the name of Jesus. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 759.

668 Here Paul is already calling Jesus "the Lord".

669 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 1009.

670 Again, the similarity with Ex 3,7–22 is striking. Concerning other similarities to the Old Testament's typos, see Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3517, Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 243–244.

671 Some similarity with Ezek 2,1–4 should be noted. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 211. The commission is here directly given to Paul by Jesus, and it concerns the service for which he is chosen. In Ac 9,15 the commission is given by Jesus, however not directly but by Ananias and it concerns the requirement for Paul to serve the Lord. In Ac 22,14 the commission is given by Jesus in the Temple and it concerns Paul service to the Lord as His witness.

672 Verse 16 contains a textual problem concerning the use of [μῆ]. For a discussion of the problem, see Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 436.

673 This again is similar to the Old Testament prophets (Jer 1,5–8, Is 42,7).

674 This is a new element in the account of Paul's conversion. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 1010.

who are in covenant with God) and Gentiles (those who are not in covenant with God). The main point of this sentence, however, is to prove that it was Jesus Himself who sent Paul not only to the Jews but also to Gentiles.⁶⁷⁵

Verse 18 presents the purpose for which Jesus sent Paul to the Jews and Gentiles. The three different expressions (ἀνοίξαι ὀφθαλμούς αὐτῶν, τοῦ ἐπιστρέψαι ἀπὸ σκοτόους εἰς φῶς καὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σατανᾶ ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν) have here the same metaphorical meaning: conversion from being a non-believer to becoming a believer of Jesus.⁶⁷⁶ These metaphors indirectly indicate that both Jews and Gentile (all people) are on wrong path, and to bring them back (Jews) or bring them (Gentiles) to the correct one is Paul's task.⁶⁷⁷ This means that Jews need to accept Jesus as the Messiah, and the Gentiles need to accept Jesus to enter the covenant with God. This conversion, and more precisely faith in Jesus, is a necessary condition (λαβεῖν αὐτοῦς) for forgiveness of sins for those who are in covenant with God (Jews) and for salvation (to enter the covenant and then to receive the forgiveness of the sins) for those who were outside the covenant with God (Gentiles).⁶⁷⁸

Verse 19 begins a new unit of the speech (Ac 26,19–23), which is a logical continuation of Lukan Paul's rhetorical strategy, where after presentation of his Jewish background (Ac 26,2–11) and his reason and purpose for becoming a believer in Jesus (Ac 26,12–18), now he gives an account concerning his mission activities after his conversion and its consequences. It opens with a renewed address to the king following by his statement, which on the one hand indicates a new topic within the speech and on other hand serves here as indicating the growth in self-understanding of Paul's attitude after the revelation.⁶⁷⁹ In circumstances, in which the revelation took place, Paul could not disobey the direct order of his Lord Jesus, and the divine aspect of the necessity should be recognised also by King Agrippa, the Hellenised Jew.⁶⁸⁰

675 The readers of Acts, already knew that Paul had been sent not only to Gentiles but particularly to them. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 744.

676 For meaning and use of these metaphorical phrases in the Bible, see Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3520–3526.

677 Schnabel takes the three metaphors as the three parts of “*the process and reality of conversion*” (*Exegetical Commentary*, 1010–1012).

678 The use of perfect passive participle of ἀγιάζω indicates the new condition grounded by God to those who believe in Jesus. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 668–669.

679 C.K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 1162; C.H. Talbert, *Reading Acts*, 208.

680 Here Paul speaks about a vision from heaven, which may suggest an inner experiences (ὁπτασία—vision), but vv. 13–14 strongly underline the public character of the event although the message is addressed only to Paul. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*,

Verse 20 gives a short account of Paul's mission activities that, while containing some new details not given in the previous account, nevertheless in general terms covers the same essential points in Paul's mission carrier. Paul started his mission activities in Damascus (without any details), then he went to Jerusalem (again without details) and Judea (this is new information) and finally he began his mission to Gentiles (without details).⁶⁸¹ The general character of this summary is self-evident. The information about mission activity in Judea—something that is not mentioned in other accounts concerning Paul's mission—causes serious problems even on the grammatical level because in this sentence alone the accusative is used, whereas in the others the dative appears.⁶⁸² The most important point here is the fact that Paul presents himself to King Herod Agrippa II as the missionary who first worked for Jews and later for Gentiles. To both groups, Paul proclaimed the three stages of the conversion process, which correspond to the same ideas expressed in a metaphorical way by Jesus when giving a commission to Paul (Ac 26,18). Here explicitly Paul talks about *conversion* understood as the changing of one's way of thinking (*to open their eyes* in Ac 26,18), about *turning to God* understood as obeying God (*turn from darkness to light* in Ac 26,18), and about *proving their change of heart by their deeds* understood as living according to the faith (*from the dominion of Satan to God* in Ac 26,18).⁶⁸³ In this way Paul indicates that he fulfilled his commission.

Verse 21 indicates that this message of Paul was a reason for his being arrested by the Jews in Jerusalem.⁶⁸⁴ In our opinion the term *ἐνεκα τούτων*—*for this reason* refers exclusively to the teaching of Paul, which was presented in

746. The term *ὁπτασία*—vision appears in the NT only in: Ac 1,22, 24,23, 26,19, 1 Cor 12,1. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3527.

681 Paul's account of the missions in Damascus (Ac 9,20–22), in Jerusalem (Ac 9,26–29), in Judea (possibly Ac 15,3 based on 1 Thess 2,14, however compare Gal 1,22), and to Gentiles (Ac 13–20) agrees with (with exception to the first stage—Damascus) the mission order of Jesus given to the Apostles (Ac 1,8), which may indicate that Paul shares the same commission as the apostles. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 1012.

682 The problem is discussed extensively by scholars. Zerwick proposes that it be considered a gloss or that the *εἰς* at the beginning of the phrase be omitted. With *εἰς* the meaning of the phrase would be: *in every country, to Jews and to Gentiles*. M. Zerwick and M. Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis*, 445–446.

683 This is very similar to the teaching of Peter in Ac 3,19. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 437–438.

684 Some scholars refer the term *ἐνεκα τούτων*—*for this reason* respectively to Paul's teaching and to his mission among Jews and Gentiles. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 670–671; Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 746–747.

metaphorical way in Ac 26,18 and in direct way in Ac 26,20. Paul fulfilled his commission (Ac 20,20) by doing things ordered him by Jesus (Ac 26,18), which were headed to recognise Jesus as the Messiah and the Saviour (Ac 26,18b). It was this teaching that provoked Jews' hatred towards Paul.⁶⁸⁵ On the account of Paul's teaching some Jews were determined to kill him. Paul's teaching and activities as presented in very general manner in v. 20 are limited to summary concerning conversion to Jesus, and any controversial topics or ideas held by Paul are avoided. At the end of the *narratio* of the speech, Paul presents himself as the servant who is persecuted for fulfilling the order of his Lord.

Verses 22–23 are the *propositio* of the speech, which had elicited strong opposition from Festus. Verse 22 says that due to God's providence Paul managed to escape from the hand of the Jews and now he has been given the opportunity to give a witness to the great and the lowly, although only the great are present here, namely, King Herod Agrippa II, Festus and other notables of Caesarea.⁶⁸⁶ In the next words Paul shows his understanding of the purpose of his interrogation, which differs from that of Festus (Ac 25,26–27). Paul says “*so I stand here testifying*”, which indicates that even now in custody Paul recognised his situation as continuing fulfilment of his commission in service of Jesus.⁶⁸⁷ Paul testifies on behalf of Jesus as the Messiah (Ac 26,7) and the Saviour (Ac 26,18) and how all teaching are in accord with Jewish Scriptures' expectation concerning the Messiah.⁶⁸⁸ Further explanation of the prophets' and Moses' teachings is given in the next verse.

Verse 23 contains Paul's explanation concerning the words of the Torah, which he presents as the topic that caused the debate between him and Festus.⁶⁸⁹ Paul says that the Torah confirms three prophecies about the Messiah, which have been realised in Jesus. According to Paul, Moses and the prophets spoke

685 The first argument for this interpretation can be vv. 22–23 where Jesus as the Messiah and the Saviour is preached by Paul to the King Agrippa. The second argument refers to the fact that in this section (Ac 26,19–23) there isn't any reference to the accusation presented in Ac 21,28.

686 Paul by saying “*But I was blessed with God's help*” confirms fulfilment of Jesus' promise given to him in Ac 26,17. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 761; Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3532.

687 Paul is not simply giving his apology before the king Agrippa, rather he is testifying that Jesus is the Messiah to the king in order to make him believe, which seems to be supported by following narrative Ac 26,24–29 and especially by Ac 26,28.

688 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 1013. It is possible that for the king Agrippa, the Hellenised Jews, the idea of resurrection after death was impossible to be accepted. Note use of the third person plural mention of the resurrection in Ac 26,7.

689 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 438.

about the Messiah's suffering,⁶⁹⁰ which makes possible debate about the Messiah who suffered to the death. Similarly, according to Paul it is possible to debate, based on the Torah, about the resurrection of the Messiah.⁶⁹¹ Finally, the Messiah, who would suffer and be raised from the dead, will become the light for all nations, first for Jews and next for Gentiles.⁶⁹²

Verse 24 contains Festus' interruption of Paul's speech, which comes in a very impulsive manner.⁶⁹³ The teaching concerning resurrection from the dead was not acceptable to Festus, who considers Paul's words to be madness, which came from Paul's learning.⁶⁹⁴ Festus incomprehension of Jewish religious issues was first indicated in his speech to King Agrippa II (Ac 25,19), where he recognised the conflict between Paul and the Jews as a controversy concerning the issue as to whether Jesus is dead or alive. This time, when resurrection of the dead is explicitly mentioned, Festus reacts with impulsively offend, because it wasn't conceivable given his Hellenistic educational background.⁶⁹⁵

Verses 25–26 form the *refutatio* of the speech with Paul's reply to Festus' insinuation. Verse 25 is a respectful and polite answer to Festus. Paul denies his madness, affirms that his teaching is the sober truth, and that he is in full control of his senses.⁶⁹⁶ The context (v. 24) suggests that Paul's words content the reasonable message, which refers not to the record of Paul's life but strictly to the last statement presented in Ac 26,22–23.⁶⁹⁷ Verse 26 contains an indirect

690 The term παθητὸς—*subject to suffering*, does not refer to “the Messiah, who had to suffer” but to the possibility that the Messiah could be subject to suffering. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 438. There are no witnesses in the Old Testament prophetic writings attesting Paul's claim concerning the suffering Messiah, which makes the statement of the Lukan Paul one based on the “Christian” interpretation of some prophetic writings, in this case a possible reference is Is 53,1–9. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 761.

691 Again there are no witnesses in the Old Testament to such claim. The Lukan Paul's statement can be based on a Christian interpretation of Is 53,10–12. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 1014.

692 A similar idea has been presented in Ac 26,17–18, and it echoes the Lukan Simeon's prophecy in Lk 2,32. The Old Testaments texts that serve here as the ground for the statement are: Is 42,6, 49,6, 51,4. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3532–3533.

693 Festus' interruption serves Luke's literary purpose, since on the one hand it ends the part of the speech concerning kerygmatic purpose of Paul's semi-apology (Ac 26,2–23), and on the other hand it starts that part of speech concerning the reaction of the main figures among the hearers of the kerygma presented by Paul. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3534–3535.

694 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 438–439.

695 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 212.

696 Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 245.

697 Differently Johnson, who relates the Paul's words to his account concerning facts from his life (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 438).

polite rebuke to Festus, who is here counted as ignorant concerning the issue and because of that he is not the primary addressee of Paul's kerygma. Although for Festus Paul's teaching is irrational, however for King Herod Agrippa II these ideas are something with which he is familiar (ἐπίσταμαι—to understood), and accordingly he can comprehend Paul's words, which makes Paul speak openly (boldly or in a direct manner).⁶⁹⁸ Paul presents his conviction that the king, Agrippa, has been well informed about matters concerning Jesus and his followers because these had widespread public repercussion among Jews in every land.⁶⁹⁹ By this affirmative statement about Agrippa's knowledge, Paul, from a rhetorical point of view, puts considerable pressure on the king, who could not easily deny the statement and consequently must confront himself with following Paul's rhetorical question.

Verses 27 and 29 are *peroratio* of the speech, which is interrupted by King Herod Agrippa II's statement (v. 28).⁷⁰⁰ Verse 27 contains Paul's final approach to the goal on which he has been fixed from the very beginning of his speech. He asked a rhetorical question addressed to the king concerning his believe in the prophecy referring to the Messiah. The question is answered by Paul himself, and it implies a strong conviction concerning Agrippa's faith in the prophecy. In this way Paul sets up a rhetorical trap for the king, who cannot deny his knowledge about Christians and their faith in the prophecies concerning the Messiah, which consequently according to the Lukan Paul should lead him to faith that Jesus is the Messiah.⁷⁰¹

Verse 28 contains the reaction of the king to Paul's claim. The words of Agrippa II can be interpreted as an affirmative statement, an ironical expression, showing partial agreement, or angry denial.⁷⁰² Following a suggestion by Zerwick that ποιέω can mean *act/play a part*, we choose to interpret v. 28 as

698 A.J. Malherbe, "Not in a Corner: Early Christian Apologetic in Acts 26,26," in *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 147–163.

699 Paul used the Greek proverb phrase "in the corner" to express the idea the movement of Jesus had gained significant attention within public opinion and become a part of present reality. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 1016. Fitzmyer recognised verse 26 as "an important verse in Luke's transposition of the Christian kerygma into a historical key" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 764).

700 At this stage of Luke's narrative, Paul's speech turns into a dialogue between Paul and the king, the main hearer, which serves to point up Luke's main purpose of setting the speech (Ac 26,2–29) in his account of Paul imprisonment.

701 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3545. Luke's narrative again presents Christian logic based on an axiom that the prophets spoke about Jesus. Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 245.

702 Concerning the text difficulties see Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 750.

an expression of angry denial.⁷⁰³ After Festus openly expressed his disagreement with Paul's belief in the resurrection of the body, Paul turned to Herod Agrippa II in order to find support from him.⁷⁰⁴ The question concerning belief in the prophecy referring to the Messiah, which obviously puts considerable pressure on the king,⁷⁰⁵ was not answered by the king but instead by Paul, and in a manner suggesting that he tries to convince the king. This would explain the king's answer: "soon you will convince me to play the Christian", which shows the king's irritation or anger.⁷⁰⁶ The answer shows that Herod Agrippa II is not on the side of Paul in terms of believing in Jesus as the Messiah.⁷⁰⁷

Verse 28 shows that Paul did not achieve the aim of the speech, which in Luke's narrative pattern concerned rejection of the kerygma by Jews.⁷⁰⁸ Although the account ends with the expected success, however it shows hope concerning a more successful future (v. 29). It is expressed in two different ways, where first one is positive and it concerns Paul's wish for King Herod Agrippa II and whole audience that in the future they may become Christians.⁷⁰⁹ Since it concerns whole audience, the Paul's wish takes on a general and universal character that Jews and Gentiles may believe in Jesus the Messiah. The second way is negative and it concerns Paul's wish for the king and the audience that they would not be imprisoned because of their faith in Jesus the Messiah. Indirectly Paul presents himself as a religious prisoner.⁷¹⁰

703 M. Zerwick and M. Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis*, 446–447. The reason for our choice is verse 29, where Paul expresses his wish concerning conversion of the king in the future, which indicates the king's denial. The fact that the king's hearing ends at this point (v. 30) indicates stronger feelings than an ironic or sarcastic attitude.

704 Horsley rightly points out that interruption devices are deliberately used by Luke not only in this speech but also in many other speeches in the Acts. G.H. Horsley, "Speeches and Dialogue in Acts," *NTS* 32 (1986): 611.

705 As the king of Jew, on the one hand Agrippa could not openly show his unbelieving in prophecy (if it was a case), and on other hand giving the affirmative answer it could suggest his sympathy for the Christian.

706 Note that king Agrippa uses the term "Christian", which is used also in Ac 11,26, in order to underline the divergence between Christians and others (Jews or Gentiles). Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 676.

707 Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 471.

708 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 752.

709 The phrase εὐχαρίστην ἂν τῷ θεῷ—I pray before God expose Paul's earnest wish for the king and the audience, however it cannot have pleased them due to the aim of the pray. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 440.

710 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 676.

C.3 The Function of the Speech

This is the last speech in the narrative concerning Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea.⁷¹¹ There are two groups of topical speeches concerning this period of Paul's life. The first group contains the three topical speeches from Paul's trial before Felix (Ac 24,2–9, 24,10–21, 24,22), and the second group contains the three topical speeches during Paul's trial before Festus (Ac 25,8–11, 25,14–21, 26,2–23,25–27,29).

Festus in Ac 25,26–27 presents the reason for the Paul's speech (Ac 26,2–29). He had found Paul guilty of no crime against Roman law, but he was still not convinced about Paul's crimes against Jewish Law. Festus asked King Herod Agrippa II to give an authoritative opinion about Paul's teaching, which would help him to write *litterae dimissoriae siue apostoli* (Ac 26,31–32). Festus needs a cogent reason to explain his approval of Paul's appeal to Caesar. Festus hoped that during the interrogation King Herod Agrippa II would offer a useful argument.⁷¹² However, the king and the audience found nothing in Paul's words that would count as a crime against the Mosaic Law (Ac 26,31). This is the final result of two long years of investigation of Paul's case by the local Roman officials, but this time confirmed by the last king of the Jews. The speech does not change the situation for anyone who participated in the interrogation. Yet Paul's condition remained unchanged, and he will go to Rome. Festus found no suitable reason for sending Paul to Caesar, what forced him to send a report similar to the one presented in Ac 25,14–21. The king Herod Agrippa II refuses "to play the Christian."

The speech does not contribute much to our understanding of Paul because most of the information is known from the preceding narrative. The speech does not make clearer, any more than the speech of Festus (Ac 25,14–21), the innocence of Paul. Because of that the speech is not necessary either for biographical or judicial information, which raises the question of its function in Luke's narrative. The function of the speech is to show the fulfilment of Jesus' plan for Saul/Paul presented to Ananias in Ac 9,15 (*he is my chosen instrument, to bear my name before Gentiles and kings and sons of Israel*). Paul proclaimed the name of Jesus to everyone, the Jews and the Gentiles, and it includes also the most important persons in the Jewish world including Greeks and Romans.⁷¹³ Even his speech, which is supposed to be apologetic one, he turns into a kerygmatic one and attempts to convert the king by using the example

711 R.F. O'Toole, *Acts 26: The Christological Climax of Paul's Defense*, AB 78 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1978).

712 This may explain Festus' reaction in Ac 26,24.

713 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 440–443.

of his own life, which on the one hand shows the realisation of God's plan, and on the other hand serves as the model of conversion.⁷¹⁴

3.3.4 The Voyage to Rome

A *The Paul's Speeches during the Voyage to Rome (Ac 27, 10, Ac 27, 21–26, Ac 27, 31. 33–34)*

During the voyage to Rome Luke was together with Paul, which explains why there is a very detailed account of this stage of Paul's imprisonment. Sailing the Mediterranean Sea was always a dangerous task, especially during the autumn, and Paul's journey by sea to Rome was not an exception. Luke describes with skill this very long and dangerous voyage in Ac 27,1–28,14. The circumstances of the voyage did not lend to including much in terms of mission activity or Christological speeches. However, Luke's portrayal of Paul during this time of suffering and struggle gives us some glimpses at Paul's character.

The text of Ac 27, 10. 21–25. 31. 33–34

¹⁰ Men, I perceive that the voyage will certainly be with injury and much loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives.

²¹ My friends, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and so incurred this injury and damage. ²² Yet, I urge you to keep courage, for there will not be a single life lost amongst you, but only the ship. ²³ For last night an angel of the God to whom I belong, and whom I serve, stood by me ²⁴ and said: have no fear, Paul; you must appear before the Caesar. Look! God has granted you all those who sail with you. ²⁵ Therefore, keep up your courage my friends! For I believe God, that it will happen exactly as I have been told.

³¹ Unless these men stay on board, you cannot be saved.

³³ He said: it is a fortnight today that you have been constantly watching and going without food, having taken nothing. ³⁴ Therefore I urge you to share some food, for this pertains to your rescue, because not a hair of your head will be lost.

A.1 The Structural Analysis of the Speeches and the Statement

Chapter 27 of the Acts of the Apostles contains two statements and two speeches by Paul divided into four units, which are all that remained of what

⁷¹⁴ Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*, 122. Walaskay thinks that the whole narrative concerning Paul's trial before the Romans officials shows the realisation of God's plan. The Roman judicial system itself is one of God's devices. P.W. Walaskay, *And So We Came to Rome. The Political Perspective of St Luke* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 58.

Paul said during the voyage to Rome.⁷¹⁵ The statements of unit one (v. 10) and three (v. 31) show Paul's common-sense concerning the safety of the voyage (unit one) and the sailors staying with the ship (unit three). They contain *epideictic* rhetoric. Unit two (vv. 21–26) is a speech, and is also *epideictic*. Although the speech is short, it is possible to outline the structure of the speech (Ac 27,21–26). The speech begins with an *exordium* (v. 21), which is here reduced to only the one word πολλῆς. The rest of verse 21 is the *narratio*. This is followed by the *probatio* (vv. 22–24), and the conclusion is the *peroratio* in vv. 25–26. Unit four (vv. 33–34) contains Paul's second speech offering encouragement in times of despair. The speech has no *exordium* but starts directly with the *narratio* (v. 33b), which is followed by a short *propositio* (v. 34a). The *probatio* of the speech is reduced to one short sentence (v. 34b). The speech ends with a *peroratio* (v. 34c). The Lukan Paul uses *deliberative* rhetoric to exhort all who find themselves in danger during a storm in order to promote their hope in salvation, rather than falling into despair.⁷¹⁶

The statements in verse 10, together with the speech in Ac 27,21–26 and the second speech in Ac 27,33–34, form a triptych structure in the Luke's account presenting the voyage to Rome. Verse 10 introduces the topic. The first speech Ac 27,21–26 develops the topic by setting it in the context of God's promise to save the travellers. The second speech Ac 27,33–34 takes on a conclusive character by witnessing to the unbroken faith of Paul in God's promise.⁷¹⁷

A.2 The Meaning of the Speeches and the Statement

Verse 10 serves as a preparation for Paul's speech in Ac 27,21–25. What Paul says here in terms of warning based on common sense or prophecy will happen soon.⁷¹⁸ Paul's common sense makes him suspicious of the wisdom of sailors and travellers who ignore the unfavourable weather conditions. The warning is amplified by two arguments: the first one concerns loss of the cargo and ship, and the second one concerns the loss of life. His voice was ignored by the centurion, the captain, and the ship's owner, and as a result disaster will come.

715 S.M. Praeder, "Acts 27,1–28,16: Sea Voyages in Ancient Literature and the Theology of Luke-Acts," *CBQ* 46 (1984): 683–706.

716 Concerning the historicity of the speech, see Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 767–768.

717 Verse 31 is the separate statement, which has no relation with the other statements and the speech.

718 Scholars differ in categorizing Paul's words. Some see them as prophetic. Fitzmyer, *The Acts*, 775. Others see them as a common sense statement. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 763. We opt for the second, since the second argument in Paul's warning will not come to pass, thereby excluding the prophetic interpretation.

Verse 21 refers to Paul's advice that was ignored by voyagers in v. 10.⁷¹⁹ The travellers found themselves in the middle of a storm, and after several days without rations their strength and hope faded.⁷²⁰ The words of comfort and encouragement were necessary to sustain their hope of surviving. In these circumstances Paul starts his speech, which begins with an *exordium* (v. 21a) identifying the audience of Paul's speech in general terms as "people". The rest of the verse (v. 21b) constitutes the *narratio* of the speech, in which Paul refers to his advice given in verse 10 pointing to the realisation of things exposed in his warning.⁷²¹

In verse 22 Paul strongly advises his co-travellers that there is no need to fall into despair because, although the ship will sink, no one will be drowned.⁷²² Verse 22 begins the *probatio* of the speech, which will be continued in the next verses (Ac 27,23–24). Here, Paul proclaims to his helpless co-travellers the good news concerning their safety: their lives will be saved but not their property, since the ship will be lost.⁷²³ This time Paul's words take on the character of prophecy, since they are not the conclusion of his deliberations but they were relayed to him by God's angel.⁷²⁴ In the night, the angel of God had stood before Paul and told him the will of God (v. 24), which indicates a revelation and not a dream, as the use of the verb *παρίστημι*—*stand up, to be present* suggests.⁷²⁵ Concerning the source of the revelation, Paul informs his co-travellers about three important facts: Paul belongs to the One God; Paul worships this God; this God speaks to Paul through His Angel.⁷²⁶ Paul says that it is the God of Israel, who will save the lives of the travellers, which gives his words more credibility, since he spoke to an audience made up mainly of Gentiles, who were familiar with saving interventions by the gods.⁷²⁷ In verse 24 Paul provides more details concerning the message given to him during the revelation. The explanation concentrates particularly on the safety of the lives of Paul and travellers and it ignores the loss of the ship. The first message concerns the saving of

719 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 218.

720 V.K. Robinson, "By Land and by Sea: The We-Passages and Ancient Literature and the Voyages," in *Perspective on Luke-Acts*, ed. C.H. Talbert (Danville: Association of Baptist Professors of Religion, 1978), 215–242.

721 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 449.

722 The term *παραινέω*—*strongly advice, urge, recommend*, is used only here and in Ac 27,6.

723 Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 448.

724 This is the only case in Acts where Paul speaks about revelation by an Angel of God instead of revelation by Jesus (Ac 18,9–10, 23,1). Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 521.

725 *παρίστημι* is a technical term in epiphanies. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 219.

726 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 777.

727 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 219.

Paul's life, where the reason for saving action of God is of a pragmatic nature.⁷²⁸ In Ac 23,11 Jesus said to Paul "*you must witness at Rome*", but here the Angel of God is more specific, saying that Paul must stand before Caesar. God's action is undertaken in order to fulfil the command given in Ac 23,11. The second message concerns safety of all the travellers, which has been granted to them because of Paul.⁷²⁹ Because Paul must safely reach Rome, not only his safety is guaranteed, but also the safety of Paul's co-travellers is guaranteed by God.⁷³⁰

Verses 25–26 are the *peroratio* of the speech. Verse 25 starts with an invocation as in verse 21, however instead of admonishing, Paul is here encouraging.⁷³¹ As the basis for encouragement Paul gives his trust in God. They should keep on hoping in the same manner as Paul. Verse 26 contains Paul's conviction that they will manage to reach an island.⁷³² Rather than a prophecy, the statement should be taken both as the logical conclusion of the message presented in verse 22, and as Luke's preparation for the following narrative (Ac 27,39–44).

Between the speech (Ac 27,21–26) and Paul's sayings (Ac 27,31,34) there is narrative concerning two weeks struggle for surviving (Ac 27,27–30), which puts an end to the hope of the sailors, who attempted to abandon both the ship and the travellers. Verse 31 contains advice given by Paul to the centurion concerning the dangers involved if the sailors abandon the ship. It is similar to the situation presented in verse 10, but this time the centurion agrees with Paul and acts according to his advice.⁷³³ This statement has no relation to the speech in Ac 27,21–26 nor to the statement in Ac 27,33–34.

728 Note two similarities (revelation and the trial before Caesar) between this message and that presented in Ac 23,11 as well as the different agents of the revelations. The change of agent may be caused by the fact that here Paul speaks to Gentiles, who are more familiar with gods' messengers rather than with a personal revelation of the gods themselves. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3631.

729 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 1042–1043. In this context note the narration of Ac 27,42–44. Some scholars think that the reason for saving the lives of the travellers was Paul's prayer for them. Peterson, *The Acts*, 690.

730 In the context of Ac 28,1–6, Mils may be correct when he says that Gentile Christians readers of Acts would understand that God's act of saving Paul's life was proof of Paul's innocence. G.B. Mils and G. Trompf, "Luke and Antiphon: The Theology of Acts 27–28 in the Light of Pagan Beliefs about Divine Retribution, Pollution, Shipwreck," *HTR* 69 (1976): 265.

731 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3633.

732 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 770.

733 Based on this verse and narrative in Ac 27,42–44 it is possible to conclude that the centurion values Paul as a wise adviser or even a divine spokesman, which explains his action of saving Paul's life (Ac 27,42–43). Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3641.

The second speech of Paul in Ac 27,33–34 picks up the topic of the speech in Ac 27,21–26, in order to confirm the most important message concerning Paul's unbroken faith in God's promise.⁷³⁴ Verse 33 shows that after the first speech (Ac 27,21–26) the situation did not change for the better and the co-travellers were overcome by even stronger despair than before. Driven by the storm they were in the middle of the sea, where clouded by doubt they abandoned hope and still refused to eat. Verse 34 shows Paul's attempt to recover first the physical strength of the co-travellers by encouraging them to eat in order to have strength to fight on.⁷³⁵ This encouragement is supported by reminding them of the message given by God's Angel to Paul (Ac 27,24–26). The reminder that they all surely will survive, helps them to recover their psychical and physical strength.⁷³⁶ The words and the acts of Paul help the co-travellers to reclaim hope (v. 35).

A.3 The Function of the Speeches and the Statement

The two speeches and the statements follow Luke's general pattern, according to which no section in the narrative of the Acts should be without a speech. However, this time the speeches and the statements do not contain any theological topic (with the possible exception of Ac 27,23) nor any important information concerning Paul's life. Taking into consideration all the information given in the speeches and the statement, it is possible to determine their two functions. First, the speech presents Paul, the man of faith and the servant of God, as the only one who could make a positive contribution in this critical situation. Paul alone knows what should be done (Ac 27,10,31) and only he brings hope to the others (Ac 27,22–26,33–34). The basis for his attitude is faith in the promise of God (Ac 27,24). The second possible function of the speech is to underline that it is God's will that Paul must stand before the Caesar (Ac 27,24), and because of that neither the Roman officials nor nature can stand in the way of God's will.

734 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 1045.

735 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 455.

736 To express his conviction that God will fulfil His promise to save the travellers, Paul used the scripture phrase "*not a hair of any of your heads will be lost*" similar in meaning to 1 Sam 14,45 and 2 Sam 14,11 (also included in Lk 12,7, 21,18), which most probably did not carry great weight with his fellow travellers but has and easily recognised meaning for the readers of the Acts. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 777.

3.3.5 In Rome

Luke's Acts of the Apostles end with a short account (Ac 28,17–31) of Paul's arrival in Rome and the beginning of his imprisonment in the city for two years.⁷³⁷ In spite of the shortness of the account there are three speeches, which create the most important parts of the narrative.⁷³⁸ Each of the speeches is a part of the dialogue between Paul and Jews living in Rome, focusing on the general characteristics of Paul's mission activities in the "eternal city".

A *The Speech of Paul to the Elders of the Jewish Community in Rome* (Ac 28, 17–20)

The apologetic speech of Paul to the elders of the Jewish community in Rome seems to be of crucial importance in Luke's short narrative concerning the beginning of Paul's stay in Rome. It presents to the readers the account of Paul's imprisonment beginning in Jerusalem until arrival in Rome, from this new perspective, giving rise to differences between Luke's narrative (Ac 21,27–26,32) and Paul's interpretation (Ac 28,17–20). An analysis of the speech will point up these differences and offer reasons for the deliberate use of both within the narrative.

The text of Ac 28, 17–20

¹⁷ Brothers, although I had done nothing against our nation or the customs of our fathers, yet as a prisoner I was handed over from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. ¹⁸ When they had examined me, they wanted to release me, because there was no reason, in my case, for the death penalty. ¹⁹ But, Jews were objecting, and I was forced to appeal to the Caesar, but not because I had any accusation against my nation ²⁰ This, then, is my reason for urging you to see you and to talk to you, since it is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain.

A.1 The Structural Analysis of the Speech

This is an apologetic speech given by Paul to the elders of the Jewish community in Rome immediately after his arrival in the capital of the empire

⁷³⁷ The fact that the account of Acts ends the way has led some scholars to conclusion that Acts are actually unfinished. This conclusion may be correct if Luke's aim was to write about the spread of Christian teaching throughout the whole Roman Imperium with a particular focus on Paul's role in this process, however, as Johnson rightly points, if the aim of Luke's narration is to present the fidelity of God (Ac 1,4–8), the Lukan account is complete. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 473–477.

⁷³⁸ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 790.

(Ac 28,17). The speech is preceded by verse 17 that contains important information concerning the background of the speech. Three days after his arrival in Rome Paul called the Jews to visit him. What was the reason for such a prompt action? Why did Paul call the elders of the Jewish community and not the elders of Christian community? Paul went to Rome for his trial before Caesar, and because of that he had reason (Ac 24,1, 25,1–3) to suspect that the Jews in Rome had been asked by the authorities in Jerusalem to play the role of accuser on behalf of the Sanhedrin (v. 21). During the meeting with the Jews from Rome Paul learned that no letter or messenger had been sent from Jerusalem to Rome.⁷³⁹ This means that the Jews in Rome knew almost nothing about Paul. This information was important, and allowed Paul not only to take control of his situation in Rome, but also to shape his first speech to Jews. The information that Paul called the elders of the Jewish community in Rome needs to be considered within the historical context of the position of the Jews in Rome after the reign of Claudius.⁷⁴⁰ Although the Jewish community in Rome was significantly large (between 20,000 and 30,000 people), there was no *politeuma* and many different groups of Jews took care about their own affairs separately.⁷⁴¹ Hence, although they may have been influential because of their numbers, they did not have any significant power in the capital.⁷⁴²

Concerning the rhetorical structure of the speech (Ac 28,17–20) it starts with a one-word *exordium* (v. 17b), which is followed by a *narratio* concerning Paul's declaration of his innocence and his imprisonment in Jerusalem and Caesarea (v. 17b). The next section is *probatio* (vv. 18–19a), which in the form of a narrative gives arguments for the statement presented in *narratio*. The first argument is that the Romans did not find Paul guilty of any crime (v. 18). The second argument is that it was Jews' attitude towards Paul, which forced him to appeal to Caesar (v. 19a). Verse 20 is the *peroratio* of the speech containing Paul's presentation of the true reason for his imprisonment.

739 According to Luke's narrative the recognition of Paul situation in Rome, and especially the attitude of Jewish communities in Rome towards Paul was very important, since it could influence the mode and manner of his stay in the city and his trial. However, according to Luke it was beginning of the events, which led to the second purpose of Paul's encounter with Jews, proclaiming the kerygma to them (Ac 28,23). D.G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 709.

740 By order of Claudius, Jews were expelled from Rome in the period AD 49–53. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3733–3738.

741 It may explain the attitude of the Sanhedrin, which did not send information concerning the case of Paul. It also explains the problem that Luke is referring to in verse 25.

742 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 793–796.

Immediately after the speech comes the speech of the Jews to Paul (Ac 28,21–22), which in the structure of the narrative serves as the second part of the narrative and contains the response to Paul's apology.

A.2 The Meaning of the Speech

Verse 17 indicates that the speech has an apologetic character. Paul addresses the Jews as “brothers” and thus counts himself as a Jew. This is shown again by his use of τῶ λαῶ ἣ τοῖς ἔθεσι—*people or customs*, where “people” indicates the Jews and “customs” refers to the Jewish way of life.⁷⁴³ Paul starts his apology with a statement concerning his innocence, expressed in negative way “*Brethren, I had done nothing against our people, or the customs of our fathers*”, which in fact is a direct answer to the accusation presented at the very beginning of Luke's narrative concerning Paul's imprisonment (Ac 21,28). Although there was no reason for his imprisonment, in Jerusalem Paul was arrested and handed over to the Roman authorities. These words refer to the narrative found in Ac 21,27–23,22, which shows that from the very beginning Paul was in the hands of the Romans who arrested him (Ac 21,31–33). However, here Paul suggests that the Jews arrested him and then handed him over to Romans.⁷⁴⁴ The very schematic account of Paul's two-year imprisonment shows that Paul is consciously placing responsibility for his trial before Caesar on the shoulders of the Jews in Jerusalem (v. 19). Two important matters are brought forward: the first concerning Paul's claim to be innocent, and the second regarding the Jews' responsibility for Paul's imprisonment. However, these claims must be proven.

Verse 18 presents proof for the first claim concerning Paul's innocence. It contains another schematic account of Paul's trial before the Roman authorities in Caesarea (Ac 23,23–26,32). Paul says that Roman authorities found him guilty of no crime. This is true in the case of a possible crime against Roman law, but not in case of Jewish Law, because due to lack of knowledge on the part of Festus of the Jewish religion and customs the problem concerning Paul's crimes against the Jewish Law officially remained unsolved until the end of Paul's speech before King Herod Agrippa II. Surprisingly, according to Paul in Ac 28,18 both Felix and Festus were about to release Paul on account of his

743 The term λαός—*people* describes Israel as the “God's people” (Ac 2,47, 3,24, 4,10). Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 469.

744 Many scholars see here an analogy with the prophecy concerning Jesus' imprisonment (Lk 9,44, 18,32, 24,7). Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 227; Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 796–7976.

innocence.⁷⁴⁵ This information is not supported by the account of Ac 23,23–26,32. It raises a question concerning Paul's reason for such a presentation of the issue.⁷⁴⁶ Probably the argument that the Romans found Paul guilty of no crime and they were ready to free him was intended to present the action of the Jews in Jerusalem as being unjust.

Verse 19 provides the proof for the second claim of Paul, which concerns Jews' responsibility for handing him over to the Romans. Here, Paul in a brief manner gives an account similar to Ac 23,12–22 and Ac 25,1–12. The determination of the Jews from Jerusalem to take charge of the case of Paul and judge him again before the Sanhedrin left Paul with no possibility other than appeal to Caesar to save his life.⁷⁴⁷ The additional information Paul gives, namely, that his appeal to Caesar was not intended to accuse his own nation the Jews, is of crucial importance in the context of situation of the Jews living in Rome. The Jews were not in good standing in Rome, partly because of their religion and costumes, and partly as a result of the disturbances they caused.⁷⁴⁸ Before they met Paul they only knew that he was a member of the Christian sect. The relationship between Jews and Christians in Rome was complicated, and usually the source of controversy and disturbance. In this context, Paul, a Christian who came to Rome in order to accuse the Jews, would be very unwelcome to the Jews living there. Paul's declaration allayed their suspicious, and, as verse 20 suggests, it was the main reason for the Paul's invitation to the elders of the Jewish communities.

Verse 20, beginning with διὰ, relates what follows with the end of v. 19, and indicates that Paul's apology refers to his appeal to Caesar, which had not been made in order to accuse the Jews. In order to make it clear to the Jews in Rome, Paul invites them to hear his apology, which ends with statements indicating that Paul is on the side of the Jews living in Rome, in matters concerning the hope of Israel.⁷⁴⁹ Johnson thinks that Paul refers here to the hope of the

745 The Roman authorities are here presented in very positive light as the ones who do not take responsibility for Paul's fate. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 1067.

746 Again, the analogy to the account concerning Jesus' trial is pointed out by many authors (Lk 23,15–18).

747 In the Qumran literature there is a case of the condemnation of a Jew who is accused by other Jews before foreigners (11QT 64,6–8).

748 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3740–3743.

749 After indicating the responsibility of the Jews from Jerusalem (Ac 28,17–19) for his fate, now Paul presents himself as being on the same side as the Roman Jews. In this context the mention of the phrase "*the hope of Israel*" seems to be of crucial importance, and determining of the meaning and understanding of the phrase influences the interpretation of the narrative Ac 28,17–31. Concerning the interpretation of the phrase scholars are

resurrection of the death (based on Ac 23,6, 24,15, 26,22–23),⁷⁵⁰ however this speech does not contain any kerygma, also the other two speeches in the section do not develop the topic of resurrection of the death, and even Luke's narrative (Ac 28,23–25) itself does not mention resurrection but rather strongly suggests the Messianic interpretation of the phrase. In our opinion it seems preferable to think that Paul refers to the general hope concerning the Messiah, since Paul is speaking about the kingdom of God, he attempts to persuade them to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, and he uses arguments from the Law and prophets (Ac 28,23). Also quoting from Is 6,9–10, which is the largest part of Paul's second speech to the Jews in Rome, he centres on the problem of the stubbornness of Jews, their reluctance to accept Jesus as the Messiah (general expectation of Jews) rather than the resurrection of the death (particular and theoretical problem within Judaism).

A.3 The Function of the Speech

The purpose of the speech is apologetic. Paul presents his interpretation of his imprisonment and the trials to the elders of the Jewish community in Rome, which can become either his opponents or his supporters. The first function of the speech is to give the account concerning Paul's own presentation of his case. Paul presents himself as being innocent, oppressed by the Jews in Jerusalem, which had forced him to appeal to Caesar in order to save his own life. This appeal was not intended in order to accuse the Israel, or to harm anyone among the Jews living in Rome.⁷⁵¹ This form of presentation shows that Paul's case is of a private nature concerning only relations between him and some Jews in Jerusalem. However, the last verse (v. 20) of the speech indicates another possible purpose for Paul's invitation of the Jews, which concerns Paul's last (recorded by Luke) mission attempt addressed to Jews.⁷⁵²

The second function of the speech relates to its place within the group of three speeches belonging to the account of Paul's stay in Rome. This is the introductory speech, which presents the main topic (the hope of Israel) that will be consequently developed in the following speeches. The apologetic part of the speech serves here to create a foundation for Paul's evangelistic attempt,⁷⁵³

divided into three groups: (1) refers the phrase to the resurrection of the death; (2) refers to Messianic hope; (3) refers to the Messiah and the resurrection. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 793.

750 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 469.

751 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 790.

752 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3732–3733.

753 Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 257.

since Paul was not found guilty of any crime against the Law and he has no intention to accuse Jews or to act against the Jewish communities in Rome, what makes it easy for both sides and enable them to proceed directly to the matter they are interested in sharing (Ac 28,22).

B *The Speech of the Jewish Elders to Paul (Ac 28, 21–22)*

The speech of the elders of the Jewish community in Rome to Paul describes the nature of relations between them. Paul is asked by Jews in Rome to address a fact of generally negative image of the sect. Comparing to knowledge of Paul himself, they know even less about the sect, what stimulates their curiosity about what Paul has to say about this issue. We will turn to comment on the function of the speech within Luke's narrative, after looking more closely at its content.

The text of Ac 28, 21–22

²¹ We have not received any letter about you from Judea, nor have any of our brothers come and reported or said anything evil about you.²² However, we consider worthy to hear from you what you think with regard to this sect, known to us, since it is everywhere opposed.

B.1 Structural Analysis of the Speech

The speech of the elders of the Jewish community in Rome is a direct comment on Paul's speech. It contains two positive elements, though they come as negative statements (v. 21), and their request for evaluation of the sect, which he is the member (v. 22). The first positive element confirms the lack of any written communication between the Jews in Jerusalem and the Jews in Rome with reference to the case of Paul. The second statement concerns the official accuser in Jerusalem, who has failed to come to Rome in order to present a case against Paul.⁷⁵⁴ These two statements clarify the attitude of the Jews in Rome towards Paul. The request concerns the most important issue for the Jews in Rome, since the sect to which Paul belongs has earned bad reputation among them.⁷⁵⁵ Any particular rhetorical structure of the speech cannot be determined because the speech takes the form of short, very formal and straightforward answer to matters presented in Paul's speech (Ac 28,17–20).

⁷⁵⁴ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 470.

⁷⁵⁵ Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 800.

B.2 The Meaning of the Speech

Verse 21 affirms that there is no letter or messenger from Jerusalem to inform the Jews in Rome about Paul. It does not mean that a letter or messenger was not sent from Jerusalem.⁷⁵⁶ It only means that prior to Paul's arrival in Rome no information concerning Paul's case has reached the ears of the Jews in Rome. Consequently, on the personal level, the elders of the Jewish community in Rome have no accusation to make against Paul. In this way, Luke sets the scene for the main topic of the speech, which concerns the negative evaluation of the Nazarene sect by the Jews in Rome. It is probably for this reason that they promptly replied to Paul's invitation (v. 17).

Verse 22 shows that the Jews in Rome did not have a positive opinion concerning the Christian movement. They know about the Nazarenes, but they want to hear Paul's opinion or his apology.⁷⁵⁷ It seems to be impossible that Jews in Rome have not encountered Christians.⁷⁵⁸ Although they had not expressed any antagonism towards Paul himself, they expressed a negative evaluation of the sect Paul's belong to. The phrase "*we think it would be as well to hear your own account of your position*" indicates that an apology is expected rather than introduction to the thoughts and deeds of the Christians. The expression *this sect* in Ac 28,22 shows that the Jews know that Paul is a Christian-Jew, which suggests that their request was not entirely neutral. Paul uses this opportunity to proclaim the kerygma (v. 23).

B.3 The Function of the Speech

The speech itself presents the viewpoint of Jews in Rome concerning the person of Paul (v. 21) and the sect, of which Paul is a member (v. 22). They are not interested in matters concerning the problem between Paul and Jews in Jerusalem, however they consider it as very important to know Paul's mind concerning the Christ/Christian teaching, which suggests that it could be the crucial point in their decision regarding an attitude towards Paul.

⁷⁵⁶ If neither a message nor official delegates were sent from Jerusalem to Rome, it would mean that the authorities in Jerusalem formerly dropped Paul's case allowing the Romans to end the case according to their will. This seems more possible since Josephus writes of many delegations sent to Rome but all of the cases concern political matters (affairs of royal family) or socio-religious matters (relation between the political administration and the religious authorities or relations between Jews and non-Jews) but none on strictly problematic issues within the Jewish religion. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 712–713.

⁷⁵⁷ Conzelmann thinks that Jews in Rome speak in a way suggesting that they still do not know the Christian movement in Rome, which serves Luke's aim to present Paul as the first missionary preaching to Jews in Rome (*Acts of the Apostles*, 227).

⁷⁵⁸ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 794.

The speech is the second in the group of three speeches concerning Paul's stay in Rome, and it determines its function according to Luke's general pattern concerning presentation of the topical speeches. The speech has a progressive function within the group of speeches, which is to create the basis allowing the narrative to move from the apologetic level (Ac 28,17–20) to the kerygmatic level in Ac 28,23–31. For this reason the speech starts with the Jews' answers to Paul's apology (v. 21) but ends with their request concerning what for them is an important issue, so giving an opportunity to Paul to engage in mission amongst them. Although Paul is a prisoner, he continues his mission to Jews (Ac 28,30–31).

C *The Speech of Paul to the Jews in Rome (Ac 28, 25–28)*

After Paul's apology in Ac 28,17–20 and the answer of the elders of Jewish communities in Rome (Ac 28,21–22), which ends with the request for an explanation concerning Christians, we naturally expect that the second speech of Paul will be an answer to the request. However, the content of Paul's answer to the Jews is presented in the narrative section (Ac 28,23–24) leading to the second speech of Paul being a critique of the Jews' stubbornness, so creating the reason for Paul's mission among Gentiles. The content of the speech has many similarities with the end of Paul's speech to the Jews in Pisidian Antioch (Ac 13,46–47),⁷⁵⁹ what indicates that the speech has a specific function not only within the set of topical speeches but also within all the speeches by Paul found in Acts (Ac 13–18).

The text of Ac 28, 25–28

²⁵ The Holy Spirit rightly spoke to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet:

²⁶ Go to this people and say: *you will indeed listen, but never understand, and you will indeed look, but never perceive.* ²⁷ *For the heart of this people has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and they have shut their eyes. Lest they should see with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.* ²⁸ Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen.

C.1 The Structural Analysis of the Speech

The second speech (Ac 28,25–28) is given by Paul to the Jews in the context of Paul's proclamation of Jesus as the Messiah to the Jews of Rome (v. 23). This proclamation was partly successful, but also partly a failure (v. 24). This time,

⁷⁵⁹ Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*, 132.

however, Luke's Paul gives particular attention to those who rejected his message. Concerning the contents of the message, the speech has a close similarity to the very first speech of Paul given in Pisidian Antioch (Ac 13,46–48). This is hardly a coincidence, rather it shows how well the Luke's narrative has been designed, since it ends at the same point (effect of Paul's proclaiming kerygma to Jews) from which it started, but now taken to a different level, since it is the last speech of Paul and the last mission undertaken by Paul that is recorded in Acts.⁷⁶⁰

The speech has three parts but has no particular overall structure. In verse 25 Paul confirms rightness of the words the Holy Spirit spoken by the prophet Isaiah to the ancestors about their stubbornness, which in Paul's opinion refer also to those who now in Rome do not accept his kerygma. Verses 26–27 are a quotation from Is 6,9–10 referring to rejection of God's message by the Jews. The verses are the basis for Paul's final statement given in verse 28, and it concerns Gentiles as the addressees of Paul's mission. The speech uses epideictic rhetoric with a strong juridical tone, where the consequences of the general attitude of Jews are directly laid out.⁷⁶¹

C.2 The Meaning of the Speech

The second speech begins in verse 25 with Paul's application of the prophecy of Isaiah to the actual situation. The Jews in Rome were divided into two opposite groups in the matter concerning Paul's proclaiming of Jesus as the Messiah.⁷⁶² The statement presented by Lukan Paul at the beginning of Paul's mission activities in Pisidian Antioch (Ac 13,46–48) is also in very similar manner repeated at the end of Luke's account of Paul's mission in Rome (Ac 28,25–28), and the central idea that the Jews do not obey God; this general statement applies not only to the Jews contemporary to Paul but it was also characteristic of the Jews of ancient times.⁷⁶³ The fact that Paul used the words of a prophet, which here are presented as the words of the Holy Spirit, amplify the meaning of the statement, easily recognised by the reader of Acts familiar with Luke's theological understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in the process of cre-

760 The fact that some Jews did not accept Paul's proclaiming of Jesus forced him to turn to Gentiles.

761 Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*, 131.

762 Note that than the narrative presents the partly successful partly failed results of Paul's mission among Jews in Rome, Paul's statements offer a general negative evaluation of Jews in Rome.

763 Keener underlines that Isaiah quotation serves here as the "*larger pattern*", (*Acts*, vol. 4, 3732–3733).

ation of the Church. The Lukan Paul, using the authority of the Holy Spirit, declares that mission to Jews (in very general meaning) has little if any hope.⁷⁶⁴

Verse 26 is a quotation from the LXX version of Isaiah (Is 6,9–10) who was commonly used in the context of discussion concerning the rejection of the Gospel by the Jews.⁷⁶⁵ The quotation refers to the duty of God's messenger, who using metaphorical language exposed the stubbornness of the hearers (Jews), which results in their incapability to understand what they hear and to recognise the true meaning of the things they see. In the passage the messenger is Isaiah, but in Luke's narrative the messenger is Paul, whose testimony is not accepted in the same way as Isaiah's was not accepted.⁷⁶⁶ By presenting Paul as the God's messenger, Luke indirectly indicates that the words of Paul are God's words.⁷⁶⁷

Verse 27 offers the reason for the Jews' attitude mentioned in verse 26. Their hearts are dull (they are arrogant), their ears are heavy (they are unwilling to hear), and their eyes are shut (they are unwilling to see).⁷⁶⁸ These three features fully describe their incapability to follow God's will, which comes from their free choice not to obey the words of God. The deliberative attitude of Jews is expose by term *μήποτε*—*lest*, which indicates conscious refusal to see, to hear and to understand. The main reason for their choice is a conscious lack of willingness to change their way of thinking and acting, what is expressed by the term *ἐπιστρέψω*—*to turn to*, which involves repentance.⁷⁶⁹ The last phrase in the verse 27 *καὶ ἰάσομαι αὐτούς*—*and I will heal them* indicates that they remain in their unfavourable condition, since they refused to submit themselves to the will of God.⁷⁷⁰ In the context of Ac 28,25–28 these two verses (Ac 28,26–27) serve the Lukan Paul to declare clearly the idea that the Jews themselves are responsible for the rejection Jesus as the Messiah.

Verse 28 gives the result of the situation presented in vv. 24–27. Because the Jews did not accept Jesus as the Messiah, the Gospel of Jesus will be proclaimed to the Gentiles, and they will accept it.⁷⁷¹ This verse starts with the

764 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 227.

765 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 795. Concerning differences between the Hebrew version and LXX version of the text, see Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 804–805.

766 Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 508.

767 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 1072–1074.

768 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 471–472.

769 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3735–3736.

770 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 1074.

771 It does not mean that Paul abandoned his mission “first to Jews”, it rather means that the Jews' rejection of his kerygma forced him to undertake the mission among Gentiles. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3756–3758.

phrase “*Let it be known to you*”, which indicates that an important and very official statement will be made.⁷⁷² The first statement concerns something rather shocking for the Jews in Rome, since it informs that “salvation of God” has been sent (ἀπεστάλη—indicative aorist passive is used) to Gentiles. The statement has an inclusive character rather than one of rejection, since it includes Gentiles among the people of God, and it does not exclude Jews from the people of God. The second statement, which takes the form of prophecy or a strong conviction concerning the future (ἀκούσονται—indicative future middle) that Gentiles will believe, this means that they will obey God’s words proclaimed by Paul. This foreseen attitude of Gentiles is made by the Lukan Paul in stark contrast to present Jews’ attitude by using an intensive pronoun αὐτοί. The second statement takes a general reference, since in fact there were Jews in Rome who believed in Jesus, just as there were Gentiles who did not believe in Him,⁷⁷³ however here the statement serves as the general conclusion fitting Luke’s theological concept rather than as a precise description of real situation. The main point of this statement is to explain the manner in which the will of God towards Saul/Paul (Ac 9,15, 22,21) was fulfilled.

C.3 The Function of the Speech

In the group of the three topical speeches in the narrative of Paul’s stay in Rome, this speech forms a conclusion.⁷⁷⁴ In the very short account referring to Paul’s stay in Rome (Ac 28,14–31), Luke focuses almost exclusively on relations between Paul and the Jews,⁷⁷⁵ since this relationship has an important role in the narrative concept of Luke’s account concerning Paul and his missions (Ac 28,13–18). After Paul presented his apology, which was accepted (Ac 28,17–20), he was asked to explain the controversy concerning the sect to which he belongs (Ac 28,21–22).⁷⁷⁶ This became the beginning of the proclamation the kerygma to the Jews in Rome, which resulted partly in success but partly it was

772 The phrase is absent in other two texts concerning Paul’s declaration about mission to Gentiles (Ac 13,46, 18,6).

773 There are three statements concerning Paul’s turn to Gentiles (Ac 13,46—in Asia Minor; 18,6—in Greek; 28,28—in Rome), and all of them appear in the context of rejection of Paul’s kerygma by Jews. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 472.

774 P. Davies, “The End of Acts,” *ExT* 94 (1983): 89–127.

775 Relations between Paul and Christians in Rome are barely mentioned in Ac 28,15. This may indicate two things. First, it was natural that Paul would have had contacts with Christians there. Second, for some reason Luke considered the relation between Paul and the Jews to be more important for his narration’s structure than Paul’s relations with Christians.

776 Paul’s speech in Pisidian Antioch was also initiated by Jews (Ac 13,15).

a failure.⁷⁷⁷ The last words of Paul in Acts, although taking a very general form, are addressed to those Jews who reject the kerygma. Their attitude is the reason for Paul's mission to Gentiles,⁷⁷⁸ but it is not the first or a new case, since Luke recorded two other similar cases (Ac 13,46, 18,6). Thus indicating that this pattern goes through whole narrative concerning Paul's mission. There is other Luke's pattern used to describe Paul's mission, which concerns his mission to the Jews. From the very beginning of his account concerning Paul until the end of Paul's mission (Ac 28,28), Luke always indicates that Paul's first encounter in a new mission place was with Jews. Luke, underlining from the very beginning (Ac 9,15) that Paul is the apostle to Gentiles, creates a wrong impression about Paul's mission to Jews, which was his basic aim. The reason for the Paul's mission to Gentiles, without abandoning the mission to Jews (general attitude), was the rejection of his kerygma by Jews (partly) and at the same time its acceptance by Gentiles (partly). This happened during his mission in Asia Minor (Ac 13,46), also during the mission in Greece (Ac 18,6) and finally during the mission in Rome (Ac 28,28). The second speech of Paul and especially its final statement (v. 28) on the one hand explains to the local community of Jews Paul's reason for proclaiming the kerygma to Gentiles in Rome, and on the other hand presents the fulfilment of two of the most important Luke's theological themes: the mission to the end of the world and Paul as the apostle of Gentiles.

777 This is the one of Luke's patterns used for describing Paul's mission to Jews.

778 Compare Ac 13,46–47 and Ac 28,25–28. Luke indicates the reason also in Ac 9,15, 22,21.

The Structural Speeches

After presenting the group of topical speeches in chapter 2, we now continue with a presentation of the second group called the structural speeches. In this group we include, by way of a negative definition, those speeches that do *not* contain any topic developed within the groups of three speeches. In these groups the first speech has an introductory character, the second is progressive and the third is conclusive. In positive terms, the structural speech concerns only a single topic. While the topical speeches concern socio-theological themes, the structural speeches (with exception of the speech of Jesus) concern sociological themes with little interest shown in theological matters. This gives the group a special function in Luke's narrative in Acts, since each speech serves the particular need of a narrative unit. The structural speeches have no relation between each other, even if they belong to the same narrative unity, such as, for example, the speech of Demetrius (Ac 19,25–27) and the speech of the town clerk (Ac 19,35–40), both of which consider Paul's mission in Ephesus (Ac 19,1–40). Some of the structural speeches contain material partially found also in the topical speeches (Ac 14,15–17, 25,24–27), but this does not make them part of this group, since they serve not to develop the topic but to connect the narrative or the two topical speeches. In this chapter an analysis of ten structural speeches is offered.

1 The Speech of Jesus (Ac 1, 4–8)

The speech of Jesus in Ac 1,4–8 is the very first speech in the Acts, which has much in common with the last speech of Jesus in Luke's Gospel (Lk 24,38–48), especially with Lk 24,47–48.¹ This particular fragment contains a promise of granting the power of the Holy Spirit to His disciples, and their mission to the ends of the world.² However, the common features in Acts and in the Gospel

1 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 28. See also: M. Parsons, *The Departure of Jesus in Luke-Acts: The Ascension Narratives in Context*, JSNTSS 21 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987).

2 The similarities: stay in Jerusalem (Ac 1,4=Lk 24,49); baptism in the Holy Spirit (Ac 1,4–5,8=Lk 24,49); being witnesses to the whole world (Ac 1,8=Lk 24,47–48). See Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 192.

are used in different contexts, with different perspectives and functions.³ In Lk 24,38–48 the common features (with the exception of the order to stay in Jerusalem) are parts of Jesus' explanation concerning His teaching and acts, but in Ac 1,4–8 they are part of the instructions concerning the future events.

The text of the speech (Ac 1, 4–8)

⁴ While staying with them, he had told them not to leave Jerusalem, but await the promise of the father. He said, "this is what you have heard from me: ⁵ John baptized with water, but after a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit". ⁶ Those who had gathered together therefore asked him, "will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has decided by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive a power from the Holy Spirit coming upon you. And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all of Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth".

1.1 Structural Analysis of the Speech

The first speech (Ac 1,4–8) in the Acts of the Apostles is given by the risen Jesus to His disciples before His ascension into the heaven. The speech is divided in two parts by the question contained in verse 6.⁴ In fact, Luke presents the first part of the speech (Ac 1,4–5) as an order addressed to disciples (παρήγγειλεν αὐτοῖς), followed by an indication of the purpose of the order (ἀλλὰ περιμένειν τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πατρὸς ἣν ἠκούσατέ μου). The disciples must stay in Jerusalem until a promise will be fulfilled. Verse 4 is followed by an explanation of the meaning of the word "promise" (v. 5), which here means baptism with the Holy Spirit. Jesus initiates this part of speech.

Before Luke presents the second part of the Jesus' speech (vv. 7–8), he indicates the reason for the following explanation (v. 6).⁵ The disciples understood that baptism with the Holy Spirit means the beginning of the eschatological

³ D.W. Palmer, "The Literary Background of Acts 1:1–4," *NTS* 33 (1987): 427–438.

⁴ The two parts of the speech create two subsections, where the first in Ac 1,4–5 has the structure:

A—an order: verse 4a—he had told them not to leave Jerusalem.

A¹—the purpose of the order: verse 4b—but to wait there for what the Father had promised.

X—indication of a promise: v. 5—John baptized with water but, not many days from now, you are going to be baptised with the Holy Spirit.

⁵ The second subsection (Ac 1,7–8) has the structure: Ac 1,6–8:

B—question: v. 6—Lord, has the time come for you to restore the kingdom to Israel?

B¹—an answer to the question: v. 7—It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority.

times, which will come soon. Because of that they asked a question⁶ (v. 6) that contains the typical Jewish understanding of the eschatological times. The disciples had not given adequate attention to Jesus' words and as a result they do not understand the meaning of the master's speech. The second part of the speech contains a direct but negative answer to the question (v. 7) indicating that the matter of the restoration of the kingdom of Israel is entirely God's prerogative and it has no connection with the baptism with the Holy Spirit. The "promise" indicated in v. 5, which is the baptism with the Holy Spirit, Jesus connects with the disciples' witness to the world (v. 8). They will receive the power of the Holy Spirit in order to proclaim the name of Jesus to the ends of the earth. In this way the Holy Spirit will become the agent of the disciples' mission activities.

The division of the speech (Ac 1,4–8) is given in the footnotes 4 and 5 to understand the construction and purpose of the speech. First, both parts of the speech have the same structure (A-A¹-X and B-B¹-X¹). Second, in both parts the preparatory subsections (A-A¹ and B-B¹) differ, however they both serve to indicate the main topic of the speech, which in both parts is the same (X-X¹). Third, the subsections X-X¹ contain the main topic of the speech, which is a power of the Spirit given to the disciples in order to make them be witnesses of Jesus to the world.

1.2 *The Meaning of the Speech*

The structural analysis of the speech shows that the main topic is the gift of the Holy Spirit that disciples are going to receive. The event is understood as the fulfilment of God's promise (Lk 24,49, Ac 1,4).⁷ On the occasion of meeting and sharing table with the disciples, Jesus after his death and resurrection introduces to the apostles a new agent by whom He will work within the community as well as within the individuals.⁸ Jesus' speech begins with the command to the apostles to remain in Jerusalem, which indicates that the

X¹—an explanation of the purpose of the promise: v. 8—*but you will receive the power of the Holy Spirit which will come on you, and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to earth's remotest end.*

6 The question considers the idea of restoring the kingdom of Israel. This, however, from the beginning to the end of Jesus' religious activities was not his aim. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 108–110.

7 However, no particular text from the Old Testament is mentioned. There is possible reference to Joel 2,28–32, which is quoted in Ac 2,17–21. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 109–110.

8 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 193.

city is the place where the event will occur.⁹ The event concerns fulfilling of the God's promise given to the chosen nation (Joel 2,28–29), which will inaugurate the beginning of the messianic age.¹⁰ That event will begin the long expected eschatological times, which were a subject of Jesus' teaching to the disciples.¹¹ This general statement is made more specific in verse 5 where Jesus directly speaks about the baptism with the Holy Spirit, which will be different from the John's baptism with water.¹² The second specification concerns those who receive the baptism, and here it is limited to the group of Jesus' apostles (Ac 1,2). The third specification concerns the time of the occurrence, which is described as *not many days from now*, what means that it will happen imminently. This very general account of the meaning of the announcement of Jesus fits with Jewish expectations concerning the messianic age, in which the restoration of the kingdom of Israel was one of the crucial elements.¹³ This is the way in which the disciples interpreted the master's words, provoking their question in verse 6.¹⁴ The question indicates both a conviction on the part of the apostles and also an uncertainty.¹⁵ The conviction concerns the person of Jesus as the Messiah, who will restore the kingdom. The uncertainty concerns the time when this will happen. Jesus' answer contains a rejection of the day of the restoration and a specification of the subject of the action.¹⁶ In light

9 According to Gerhardsson, Jerusalem is the connecting element between Israel (the chosen nation) and the new Israel (the Christian Church). B. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity*, ASNU 22 (Copenhagen: Eerdmans, 1961), 214–220.

10 Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 65.

11 Bruce, *The Books of the Acts*, 35.

12 Schnabel points out that the baptism of John signified repentance, removal of defilement and purification from sin, but baptism with the Holy Spirit would purge and restore the people of God by filling them with the power of the Holy Spirit (*Exegetical Commentary*, 74–75).

13 D.L. Tiede, "The Exaltation of Jesus and the Restoration of Israel in Acts 1," *HTR* 75 (1983): 17–26.

14 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 205.

15 In this way Luke presents also the strong expectation of the Jews believing in Jesus, rather than of the apostles, that He is the Messiah who will very soon restore the kingdom of Israel. Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 65–66.

16 Schnabel points to the fact that Jesus' answer is ambivalent and can be interpreted in four different ways: (1) rejection of the idea of an imminent end—E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, EKK, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971, 143; (2) reinterpretation of the restoration of the new Israel (church) and not of Israel—R. Maddox, *The Purpose of Luke-Acts* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1982), 106–108; (3) there is no answer to the question, but instead there is an indication of the missionary activities that must be undertaken—Fitzmyer,

of verse 8, it seems that Jesus refuses to answer the question because it has a socio-political connotation, and this points to two facts. The first refers to the apostles as those who should not know the things that are strictly God's prerogative.¹⁷ The second refers to God as being the autonomous agent who decides all matters concerning His people, including the final eschatological time that is about to begin.¹⁸ Jesus' answer is not simply a rejection in itself, it is rejection that serves to introduce a much more important issue, namely that of mission, which will become the main concern for Jesus' disciples until the restoration of God's kingdom will be completed. The use of ἀλλά—but indicates a change of subject. Although Jesus has said nothing about the topic of such importance for the apostles, He now directs the disciples' attention to the event that will occur soon, and will have great consequences. This event is the reception of the power of the Holy Spirit, which in verse 5 is called baptism in the Holy Spirit, and in the following narrative this is described in the events of Pentecost (Ac 2,1–13).¹⁹ The consequences of the event will be the ability of the disciples to become witnesses of Jesus not only in Jerusalem, but also throughout the whole world—a world that is as yet totally unknown to them, and symbolically called the ends of the earth. The mission in Judea and Samaria refers to Jews, while Judea can mean religious Jews and Samaria can mean those Jews who departed from Judaism. The mission to the ends of the earth refers to Jews living in the Diaspora and to Gentiles who do not yet know God.²⁰ The fact that Gentiles are not explicitly mentioned in Ac 1,8 does not mean that they are not clearly intended, because Ac 1,4–8 is a manifest speech, which must be interpreted in the whole context of Acts.²¹ The use of the fu-

The Acts of the Apostles, 201; (4) the Jews who believe in Jesus are the locus where the promise of God to His chosen nation was fulfilled—J. Jervell, *The Theology of the Acts of the Apostles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 18–43. See Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 76–77.

17 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 26.

18 Keener speaks about “the king would come twice, hence bringing the kingdom in two stages” (*Acts*, vol. 1, 684).

19 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 6.

20 This interpretation is supported by the content of Acts, especially Ac 15–28. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 112–113.

21 Here we refer to the suggestion by Witherington that Gentiles are not clearly intended in Ac 1,8 (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 111). His suggestion caused by lack of information concerning this mission to Gentiles in Ac 1,8, is not convincing. Rather, it is caused by the fact that Luke uses the names not in geographical, but in socio-theological terms. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 112. Note that the structure of Acts is outlined in Ac 1,8 since the mission in Jerusalem is the topic of the narrative through Ac 1–7, the mission in Judea and

ture middle (ἔσσεσθαι) in verse 8 indicates that at the time when the speech of Jesus was made, the disciples were not yet capable of undertaking the mission. It would become possible for them only by power of the Holy Spirit, which they are going to receive. According to Luke, Jesus knows that the disciples are ready to flee from Jerusalem and for this reason He charged them to stay and wait until the prophecy of prophet Joel would be fulfilled (Joel 3,1–2, Lk 24,49, Ac 1,4). Indirectly it also stresses that the event must occur in Jerusalem (Lk 24,47, Ac 1,4,8).²²

Jesus' answer (v. 7) to the question (v. 6) indicates that Luke does not accept the expectations of mainstream Judaism relating to the Messiah and the eschatological times.²³ It does not mean that he ignores the hope of the Jewish nation, but he separates the political expectations from the strictly religious and spiritual event concerning Jesus' disciples. The event of Pentecost caused the beginning of the mission activity of the Twelve, which will lead many to faith in Jesus the Messiah, and not to the beginning of activities, which will lead to the restoration of the kingdom of Israel.²⁴

1.3 *The Function of the Speech*

Luke's Gospel came to a close with Jesus' ascension into the heaven, which is preceded by the meeting of the disciples (Lk 24,36–43) and the final explanation of all that had happened (Lk 24,46–49). Luke begins the Acts of Apostles from the same point (Ac 1,3–8). The function of the duplication can be simply to indicate continuity between the Gospel and the Acts, but it seems that much more is indicated by the farewell speech of Jesus in Ac 1,2–8. The final speech of Jesus in the Gospel explains the meaning of everything that was done by Jesus and in this sense it has a more retrospective character (Lk 24,44–49), while the speech of Jesus, which opens Acts, is a proclamation of things that are about to happen.²⁵ In fact, Ac 1,4–8 is the only speech of Jesus in the Acts of the Apostles. As in the Gospel, Jesus proclaims that His death was according to prophecies of the Scriptures (Lk 24,44), here in Acts, Jesus proclaims that His Gospel will be known to the whole world by the witness of the apostles filled with power of the Holy Spirit, as the scriptures had foretold (Joel 3,1–5).

Samaria is the topic of Ac 8–12.15, and the mission to the ends of the earth is the topic of Ac 13–14, 16–28.

22 Conzelmann thinks that for Luke, Jerusalem represents the continuity between Israel and the church (*Acts of the Apostles*, 6–7).

23 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 205.

24 Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 66.

25 Bruce, *The Books of the Acts*, 36–37.

According to Luke, who wrote the speech afterwards, the primary function of Jesus' farewell speech in Ac is a manifest.²⁶ It indicates that proclaiming of the Gospel to the whole world is the will of Jesus, and it will be done not by human power or determination but by the power of the Holy Spirit, according to which the disciples became capable to give witness about Jesus.²⁷ The speech of Jesus points to the Holy Spirit as the agent of all the works done by the church in the eschatological times (the time of the church). On other hand, from the narrative perspective, Ac 1,8 indicates the whole structure of Luke's account in the Acts. Ac 2–7 refers to the mission activities of the disciples in Jerusalem. Ac 8–12 and Ac 15 refer to the mission in Judea and Samaria, which is followed by an account concerning the mission to the ends of the earth (Ac 13–14, 16–28). In fact, the last part of Jesus' speech (v. 8) functions also as an outline of the contents of Acts.

2 The Speech of Peter (Ac 1, 16–22)

After presenting in Ac 1,8 an outline of Acts, Luke goes directly to the narrative concerning the first part of his writing, which considers the situation of the Twelve and believers of Jesus in Jerusalem (Ac 1,12–7,60). The first speech in this section refers to the problems within the group of the twelve apostles and its solution (Ac 1,16–22). The death of Judas and his replacement in the group is the topic of the speech given by Peter to the large number of believers (Ac 1,15).²⁸ The place of the speech in the structure of Luke's Acts, the information provided in the speech and the way in which it is provided are carefully and logically arranged by the author in order to indicate a theological message.

The text of Ac 1, 16–22

¹⁶ "Brothers, the scripture concerning Judas, who acted as guide to the men who arrested Jesus, which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David, had to be fulfilled. ¹⁷ For he was counted among us

26 Ph.H. Menoud, "The Plan of the Acts of the Apostles," in *Jesus Christ and the Faith: The Collection of Studies* (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1978), 121–132.

27 D.R. Schwartz, "The End of the Gē (Ac 1:8): Beginning or End of the Christian Vision," *JBL* 105 (1986): 669–676.

28 R.H. Fuller, "The Choice of Matthias," in *Studia Evangelica*, ed. E.A. Livingstone, vol. 6 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1973), 140–146; Ph.H. Menoud, "Additions to the Group of the Twelve Apostles according to the Book of Acts," in Id., *Jesus Christ and the Faith: The Collection of Studies* (Pittsburgh: Pickwick Press, 1978), 133–148.

and received his share in this ministry.¹⁸ As you know, he bought a plot of land with the money he was paid for his wickedness; and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out.¹⁹ This became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their language Hakeldama, that is, "Field of Blood".²⁰ For it stands written in the Book of Psalm: "Let his habitation become desolate, and let there be no one to live in it" and "His office let another take".²¹ So, one of the men who have been with us the whole time that the Lord Jesus was living with us,²² from the beginning when John was baptizing until the day when he was taken up from us, must become with us a witness to his resurrection".

2.1 *Structural Analysis of the Speech*

The first speech of Peter (Ac 1,16–22) consists of two parts. The first part (vv. 16–20) considers Judas and the second part considers his replacement among the Twelve (vv. 21–22). The first part (A) begins with a statement that the case of Judas was foretold in the Book of Psalms (v. 16) and it ends (A¹) with a statement that Judas' doom was according to the words of the Psalm (v. 20).²⁹ The middle part of the section indicates the action (B) taken by Judas (vv. 16b–17) and consequences (B¹) of his act (vv. 18–19).³⁰ As footnote 29 indicates, the structure of the section Ac 1,16–20 (A-B-B¹-A¹) shows that the story concerning Judas' fate (vv. 18–19) is interpreted by Luke in the light of the OT writings (vv. 16a,20). Verse 20 (which is a quotation from Ps 69,26 and Ps 109,8 in a version different from LXX) serves also as an indicator of changing the topic from Judas to his replacement among the Twelve. This part of speech was created based on the sources (probably non-written) available to Luke, which is attested especially by vv. 18–19, where an explanation of the Hebrew terms is a part of Peter's speech.³¹

The second part contains the conditions, which a candidate has to fulfil (vv. 21–22a), and the necessity to fill the vacancy among the Twelve (v. 22b).

29 Subsections of Ac 1,16–20 are:

A—the case of Judas was foretold by David (v. 16)

B—the act of Judas (v. 17)

B¹—the fate of Judas (vv. 18–19)

A¹—the fate of Judas was foretold by David (v. 20).

30 The account of Judas' fate is missing in Luke's Gospel, and the version presented in Ac 1,16–20 differs from the version of Mathew's Gospel (Mt 27,3–10). Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 90–91.

31 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 39.

The requirement for the replacement is reduced to only one condition: that he be a follower of Jesus from the beginning of Jesus' ministry until His ascension. The need for a replacement indicates the purpose of the Twelve, which is to give witness to Jesus' resurrection.

The speech, containing deliberative rhetoric, is placed in Acts between the list of remaining apostles (Ac 1,12–14) and the event of Pentecost (Ac 2,1–13), which both determines the function of the speech and indicates its theological meaning.

2.2 *The Meaning of the Speech*

The first speech of Peter contains information that helps to create a picture of the probable situation and structure of the community in Jerusalem.³² The first important item of information shows that Peter is in charge of the community (v. 15).³³ Peter is not only the one who gives the speech but also the one who understands the need to find a replacement for Judas (v. 22b). Peter, as presented by Luke, sees the act of Judas as the fulfilment of prophecy (probably referring to Ps 41,9 LXX), which David foretold under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (v. 16a). This indirectly indicates that Judas' treason was not a totally unexpected act that seemed to bring to ruin the very discipleship of the Twelve.³⁴ Somehow the case of Judas was a part of the divine plan, although this does not excuse Judas from responsibility.³⁵ The case of Judas was interpreted in the light of the Old Testament writings (Ps 41,9, 69,26, 109,8) and it stressed not the failure of one of the disciples, but the fact of the fulfilment of prophecy (v. 17).³⁶ Peter explicitly refers in euphemistic terms to the action of Judas (v. 16b), which is related in full in Lk 22,3–6.21–22.47–48. He adds also that Judas was one of the Twelve and shared the same ministry with them; however he became a traitor to the One who chose him, due to his own

32 The community includes the apostles and those who from the beginning were with Jesus as well as the believers both men and women. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 10.

33 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 120–122.

34 Conzelmann rightly points to the fact that Luke understood the term *Scripture* in a general manner rather than in a particular one, what makes an attempt to determine the particular passage unnecessary (*Acts of the Apostles*, 11). Indirectly it indicates Luke's conviction that the Holy Spirit inspired Scripture. It also indirectly indicates the use of the Old Testament to explain puzzling aspects of the events concerning the Twelve and the first communities. Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 69.

35 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 1, 756.

36 ἔδει πληρωθῆναι τὴν γραφὴν ἣν προείπεν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον διὰ στόματος Δαυὶδ—the *Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David* (Ac 1,16).

wickedness and not because of some form of predestination.³⁷ Because of this unjust act he was punished in the way described by Peter in vv. 18–19, which differs from Matthew's narrative (Mt 27,5–8).³⁸ In Luke's account, as narrated by Peter, Judas is the one who bought the land, whereas according to Matthew this was done by the priests (Mt 27,6–7). Peter says that Judas fell and his abdomen ruptured, while Matthew states that he hanged himself (At 27,5). Peter (according to Luke) says that Judas' end became known to the people, but in Matthew's account the story was widely known (Mt 27,8).³⁹ Both accounts contain the same reference to Judas as the betrayer, and the name given to the field based on the story (*the field of blood*), however they differ in the reasons given for the name of the field.⁴⁰ The conclusion of this comparison is that the community in Jerusalem, at the time Luke visited it, had preserved a story concerning the death of Judas (vv. 18–19).⁴¹ Verse 20 serves as a connection between the story of Judas (the first part of the speech) and the main reason for Peter's speech, which refers to the election of the replacement for Judas (the second part of the speech). The verse combines two quotations: one from Ps 69,26 which refers to the fate of Judas, and another from Ps 109,8, which refers to the need to replace Judas. In both cases the original contexts of the quoted texts are curses.⁴² According to Luke's hermeneutics of the LXX texts, the authors of the Book of Psalms not only had foreseen the action of Judas, but he was also aware of the need for replacement.⁴³ In the second part of the speech, Peter is presented as the one who establishes the criteria for the candidates (vv. 21–22a), which concerns the need to have been an eyewitness to all words

37 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 122–124.

38 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 219; Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 35–36.

39 In our opinion, the two accounts cannot be easily harmonised, and their differences should be explained as deriving from the different purposes of these two accounts. The main purpose of the Matthew's account is to present the guilt of the High priest in using the weakness of Judas, who in an act of self-judgment hanged himself. In Luke's account Judas used the money for himself, but he accidentally fell and died, what is seen as a sudden and unexpected punishment for his action. This account puts the full responsibility on Judas, while Matthew's tradition attempts to lighten Judas' responsibility. These two accounts should be considered as deriving from independent traditions. J.B. Chance, *Acts*, SHBC (Macon: Baker Academic, 2007), 41. For an attempt to harmonise the accounts see Keener, *Acts*, vol. 1, 761–765.

40 Matthew's account refers probably to the blood of Jesus, but in Luke the reference is more likely to the blood of Judas.

41 Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 45.

42 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 11–12.

43 M. Wilcox, "The Judas Tradition in Acts 1, 15–26," *NTS* 19 (3/1972), 438–52.

and deeds of Jesus from the beginning to the end of His mission. Indirectly vv. 21–22 indicate that the “close group” of Jesus’ followers from the beginning to the very end was larger than the Twelve. The speech of Peter begins with an indication of the need for the fulfilment of Scripture, and it ends in the same manner, but this time the necessity concerns the election of one of the disciples who would replace Judas. The group of the apostles must consist of the twelve disciples, what fits with Luke’s theological interpretation of the church, as well as serving the function for which the speech of Peter was designed. The final sentence of the speech indicates also the purpose of the Twelve consisting in proclaiming of the resurrection of Jesus.⁴⁴

2.3 *The Function of the Speech*

The first speech of Peter concerning the need to replace Judas is placed by Luke after the speech of Jesus concerning the promise of receiving the power of Holy Spirit (Ac 1,4–8) and the list of eleven apostles (Ac 1,12–14), but before the event of Pentecost (Ac 2,1–36). It indicates that the passage Ac 1,15–26 has some significant function in the logic of the narrative in Luke’s writing, since it does not continue the topic of Jesus’ speech (Ac 1,4–8), nor does it belong to a group of topical speeches, which starts with Peter’s speech at Pentecost (Ac 2,14–36) concerning the kerygma proclaimed by the Twelve to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. This indicates the function of the speech as being a structural speech, which on the one hand prepares the necessary background for the narrative of the Pentecost event and Peter’s speech, and on the other hand it offers a necessary explanation of the problem concerning the author’s theological principle that the Twelve are the foundation of the new Israel.⁴⁵ Concerning the second function, according to Luke’s account, Peter and the Jerusalem community are aware of the need for a replacement, indicating that in their opinion the circle of twelve apostles cannot remain broken after the death of Judas. It indicates very strongly the intention of Lukan Peter to maintain a close relationship with the Jewish tradition concerning the twelve tribes of Israel. The circle of the twelve apostles of Jesus cannot remain incomplete because they are a foundation of the “new Israel” as the twelve sons of Jacob were for Israel. As the twelve in the Jewish context symbolised the twelve tribes of Israel, the twelve in the Christian context represented the twelve disciples of Jesus. Luke makes it clear (Ac 1,5,8) that the promise of the Holy Spirit will be given to the whole foundational group of the “new Israel”, namely to the

44 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 100–101.

45 D.W. Pao, *Acts and the Isaianic New Exodus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 123–129.

twelve apostles.⁴⁶ In Ac 2,1 where Luke begins to narrate the Pentecost event, he writes ἦσαν πάντες ὁμοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό—*they were all together in one place*. This phrase is understood by Zerwick as a pleonasm (ὁμοῦ = ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό).⁴⁷ However, it is possible to take ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό in a locative sense with reference to Ac 1,13 (and not with reference to ὁμοῦ).⁴⁸ In this case, the function of ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό is to indicate that in Ac 2,1 the twelve disciples were gathered in the same place as the eleven disciples and Jesus' relatives in Ac 1,13–14.⁴⁹ According to this possibility, the expression “they were all together in one place” refers to all the disciples (πάντες), including Matthias (ὁμοῦ) as in Ac 2,7.14, but it does not include the group of one hundred and twenty participants in the replacement event (Ac 1,15).⁵⁰

The main aim of Luke's version of Peter's speech is to indicate that after Matthias replaced Judas in the group of the twelve apostles of Jesus, the foundation of the New Israel has been firmly established. The Twelve are ready to receive the promise of the Father and start to realise the mission for that they had been appointed by Jesus (Ac 1,4–8).

3 The Community Prayer (Ac 4, 24–30)

The community prayer is the speech, which is placed in Luke's narrative between the group of topical speeches concerning the mission activities of the Twelve in Jerusalem (Ac 2,14–36.38–40, 3,12–26, 4,8–12.19–20) and the narrative concerning the conflict between the Twelve and the Temple authorities (Ac 5,29–32.35–39, 7,2–53.56.60), however it belongs to neither of these groups. The preceding context of the speech is the Sanhedrin's prohibition of proclaiming the kerygma, to which Peter and John answered negatively (Ac 4,13–22), and the following context concerns persecution of the apostles (Ac 5,17–32), what gives the speech a special function in Luke's narrative concept, while it also contains a specific theological message addressed for the readers of Acts. The following analysis will show these two aims of the speech.

46 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 1, 774–775.

47 M. Zerwick and M. Grosvenor, *A Grammatical Analysis*, 352.

48 Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 50.

49 In this case the place of the Pentecost event and the place where the replacement for Judas was carried out were not the same.

50 It is also important to notice that Luke starts the second speech of Peter (Ac 2,14–36) with the words “Σταθεὶς δὲ ὁ Πέτρος σὺν τοῖς ἑνδεκά—*Then Peter stood up with the Eleven*”.

The text of Ac 4, 24–30

²⁴ When they heard it they raise their voice to God with one heart. They prayed, “O Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them; ²⁵ it is You who spoke by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David, Your servant: “Why the Gentiles rage, why have peoples imagen vain things? ²⁶ The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers have gathered together against the Lord and against his Messiah”. ²⁷ For truly, in this very city Herod and Pontius Pilate gathered together with the Gentile nations and the peoples of Israel, against Your holy servant Jesus whom You anointed, ²⁸ to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur. ²⁹ And now, Lord, take note of their threats and grand Your servants to proclaim Your words with all boldness, ³⁰ by stretching out Your hand to heal and to work signs and wonders through the name of Your holy servant Jesus.

3.1 *Structural Analysis of the Prayer*

Luke placed the prayer after the interrogation of Peter and John by the authorities of the Temple (Ac 4,1–22), which shows that a conflict between the believers in Jesus and the authorities is approaching. The prayer unit is followed by a short summary concerning the social and religious life-style of those who believe in Jesus as the Messiah (Ac 4,32–37). At the end of the community prayer Luke placed a short narrative concerning the result of the prayer (Ac 4,37), which contains the account of “the second Pentecost” (the first one is recorded in Ac 2,1–4) of the Holy Spirit, who filled the apostles and all believers in Jesus gathered in the place with the power that enabled them to proclaim fearlessly the word of God (v. 31).

The prayer unit begins with praise of God (Ac 4,24), which is a quotation from the Book of Exodus (Ex 20,11).⁵¹ This is followed by a prophecy spoken by king David under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, which concerns the persecution of the faithful ones (Ps 2,1–2=Ac 4,25–26). After this quotation comes the interpretation of this text with reference to Jesus, the chosen servant of God, who was opposed by the whole world (Ac 4,27) and in this way fulfilled God’s plane (Ac 4,28).⁵² There follows a supplication to God concerning the present situation of the community, who must face this opposition, and ask for the power to give testimony (v. 29) and to show the divine deeds to the op-

51 Neil points out that the community’s prayer is reminiscent of the prayers in Lk 1–2, and the topic of the prayer is similar to prayers found in 2 Kings 19,15–19, Is 37,15–20 (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 91).

52 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 90.

ponents (v. 30). After the petition for power, which would allow the believers to proclaim the name of Jesus despite the prohibition by the Temple authorities, Luke gives a short account of the result of the prayer (Ac 4,31).

Although the unit is traditionally called “the prayer of the community”, Luke uses verb λέγω—to *speak, to say*, what indicates the true character of this unit. In fact the unit is a speech, which here takes the form of a prayer.⁵³ It contains an invocation (vv. 24b–25a), a quotation (vv. 25b–26), an explanation (vv. 27–28), and a petition (vv. 29–30).⁵⁴ An argument that Luke treats Ac 4,24–30 as a speech is the exegetical section (Ac 4,27–28) called an explanation, where he offers a strictly historical actualisation as an interpretation of the quotation presented in Ac 4,25b–26.⁵⁵

3.2 *The Meaning of the Prayer*

After being released by the Temple authorities, Peter and John give an account of the event to the believers in Jesus (Ac 4,23).⁵⁶ Although this is not directly indicated, the reaction of the group suggests that Peter’s account made a strong impression on the group, who recognised the real danger of the situation. However, the problem united the group and led them to spontaneous prayer containing a simple petition for power and the courage to proclaim the word of God.⁵⁷ The prayer starts (v. 24) with an invocation to God, who is here named

53 The speech has no relation to the classical rhetorical form of a speech. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 200–201.

54 Papa sees in the speech a chiasmic structure in the speech (A—vv. 24b–25a; B—vv. 25b–26; A¹—vv. 29–30). B. Papa, *Atti degli Apostoli*, vol. 1 (Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane Bologna 1981), 138–140.

55 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 35.

56 Luke writes τοὺς ἰδίους—to *their own*, which can refer to the apostles (Johnson) or to the community of believers in Jerusalem (Witherington). Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 83; Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 201. We accept the opinion of Witherington. Our arguments are:

- first, a similar situation is presented in Ac 12,12–14 and it refers to the community;
- second, if the phrase was referred only to the apostles, verse 32 would be a doublet of the Pentecost event (Ac 2,1–4), what does not correspond with Luke’s narrative concept in the Acts where a crossing of some borders is always connected with receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit (Ac 2,4, 4,31, 8,15–17, 9,17, 10,44, 11,15, 15,8, 19,6);
- third, the following context (the mission activities of the believers and their persecution) suggests that those who are in need of divine power to proclaim the name of Jesus are the believers in Jerusalem.

57 Note the use of ὁμοθυμαδόν—together, in a manner similar to Ac 1,14, which indicates that the community was united. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 201

δεσπότης—*sovereign Lord*, and described as the creator of the whole world.⁵⁸ He is also the One who spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of David in matters concerning human opposition to His will and his chosen Messiah.⁵⁹ The community was aware of fact, as it was in ancient times (vv. 25–26) so it is the same now (vv. 27–28), that there were and are still people who oppose the servants of God and their words. The quotation from Ps 2 concerns the Gentiles who opposed the nation of God throughout their history (Ac 4,25).⁶⁰ Verses 27–29 contain an interpretation of Ps 2, which refers to the case of Jesus (vv. 27–28) and the present situation of the community (v. 29a). The words of David are first referred to Jesus the Messiah, who was rejected not only by the Gentiles (Herod, Pilate, Gentiles) but also by the nation (Israel).⁶¹ As in the past the Gentiles opposed Israel as the nation of God, now the Gentiles and the nation (Israel) oppose Jesus who is the Messiah (Ac 4,27).⁶² This is a somewhat ironical situation showing that there are always those who oppose God's servants, but paradoxically it is evaluated in the prayer as a part of God's plan (Ac 4,28). The reflection concerning the past event is not the end of their prayer. According to Luke, they understood God's realisation of the salvation plan, which also includes their part in proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah, what makes them also to be subjected to persecution (Ac 4,29).⁶³ They also understood that those who opposed the servants of God would also oppose the followers of Jesus. The prohibition to proclaim the name of Jesus is addressed to Peter and John (Ac 4,17.21), but it is understood here as an obligation imposed on all believers.⁶⁴ Indirectly verse 29 shows the confidence of the believers in

58 Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 156.

59 Note the similarity of Ac 4,25 to Ac 1,16. David is presented as the servant of God, and the father of the Jews believing in Jesus, who prophesied about rejection of God and His Messiah. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 308–309.

60 The historical background of Ps 2 concerns king David, who met opposition from his enemies, however the text is interpreted by the New Testament writers as referring to the Messiah. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 254–255.

61 The mention of Herod Agrippa I among Gentiles should not surprise us if we remember that Josephus Flavius considers Herod's Dynasty to be only half Jewish (by religion), due to their Idumean roots. U.C. von Wahlde, "Acts 4,24–31: The Prayer of the Apostles in Response to the Persecution of Peter and John—and its Consequences," *Bib* 77 (1996): 241–242.

62 This interpretation of Ps 2 seems to contrast with Luke's Passion narrative in the Gospel (Lk 23,1–25). Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1168–1169.

63 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 257.

64 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 85.

regard to the obligation to proclaim the name of Jesus.⁶⁵ They were conscious of the fear in their hearts (v. 29) and their inability to do this on their own (Ac 4,29–30). What they ask for is strength to overcome their fear and weakness in order to fulfil their obligation (v. 30). They know that the strength to proclaim and to perform miracles comes from God, and that these proofs of God's power are necessary for hearers to recognise the truth of Jesus' messianic dignity.⁶⁶

3.3 *The Function of the Prayer*

Depending on the method or focus of the analysis, the community prayer can take on more than one function in the narrative structure of Acts. Here, we will present three possible functions of the unit contained in Ac 4,24–30.

In Luke's narrative concept, this prayer unit serves as an indicator of the recognition by the followers of Jesus that their kerygma will not be accepted by the authorities of the Temple, which de facto must lead to open conflict.⁶⁷ Although here the opponents of the disciples' kerygma are only the religious authorities of Israel, however mention in a general manner the opponents of Jesus who were the religious and political authorities, both Jew and Gentile, may suggest that the disciples of Jesus, according to Luke, were aware of a more comprehensive problem.⁶⁸ The following narrative in Ac 5,17–9,19 concentrates particularly on the persecution of the believers in Jesus, beginning with the persecution of Peter and John, then the spontaneous reaction of the crowd against Stephan, and escalating into a methodical opposition supported by the highest authorities of the Temple.

The prayer unit can take another function in Luke's narrative. It serves as a preparation for the event described in Ac 4,31, in which all the believers are filled with the Holy Spirit. As in Ac 2,1–4 the Holy Spirit is the agent of the power, which allowed the Twelve to start proclaiming the kerygma, here (Ac 4,31) the Holy Spirit is the source of the power, which enabled the followers of Jesus to proclaim the kerygma in this time of distress.⁶⁹ According to the fundamental theological concept of Luke in Acts, it is the Holy Spirit who is the

65 The obligation to proclaim the kerygma comes from the fact that the believers understood themselves to be slaves (v. 29) of the sovereign Lord (v. 24). Note that the term "slave" is used here in a context of praying. Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 92.

66 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1172.

67 B.R. Gaventa, "To Speak the Word with All Boldness: Acts 4,23–31," *Faith and Mission* 3 (1986): 80.

68 Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 145–147.

69 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 262–263.

agent of all the works done by the followers of Jesus. This means that the power to obey Jesus in matters concerning the kerygma and the power to disobey the authorities of the Temple who prohibited the kerygma, both come not from the disciples and the followers themselves, but from the Holy Spirit.⁷⁰

The paragraph (Ac 4,24–30) can take on yet another function in the narrative structure of Acts, namely, to point to the moment when the followers of Jesus as a community (not as individuals) made the choice to obey the words of Jesus and to disobey the orders of the authorities. The choice had its consequences and was probably the beginning of the rift between the believers in Jesus and Judaism.⁷¹ The Temple authorities could not allow them to proclaim the name of the man whom they considered to be a blasphemer, whereas the followers of Jesus could not stop proclaiming the name of the one they believed in, since they were following His order.⁷² A polarisation of the fundamental priority of both groups has emerged and its consequences are approaching. This function seems to be preferable since it is more coherent than the two previously mentioned, and in fact it includes the elements suggested in the other two.

4 The Speech of the Twelve (Ac 6, 2–4)

This very short speech of the Twelve interrupts the unit in Luke's narrative concerning the beginning of the persecution in Jerusalem, which contains three speeches (Ac 5,29–32, 5,35–39, 7,1–60). The topic of the speech does not fit either with the two previous speeches or with the following speech. This raises a question concerning the function of this speech in Luke's account. Although the topic of speech does not relate directly to the topic of the whole unit (Ac 4,17–7,60), it nevertheless functions as a preparation for the following speech.

The text of Ac 6, 2–4

² So the Twelve called the community of the disciples together and addressed them, "It is not right that we should neglect preaching the word of God to serve tables. ³ Therefore brothers, select from among yourselves seven men of good reputation, filled with the Spirit and with wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty. ⁴ But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the service of the word".

⁷⁰ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 197.

⁷¹ Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, 121–122.

⁷² Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 264–265.

4.1 *Structural Analysis of the Speech*

The speech was given during an official meeting of all Jesus' disciples⁷³ in Jerusalem, called by the Twelve.⁷⁴ The reason for calling the meeting was a conflict within the community between Aramaic-speaking and Greek-speaking Jews, resulting from a complaint by the Hellenists that the Hebrews' widows were favoured during the daily service (Ac 6,1).⁷⁵ The Twelve called all the disciples in order to set up the group of seven who will be accepted by both parts of the community, and to whom the task of service will be entrusted (Ac 6,2). The speech begins with a statement, couched in negative terms that the daily service of the Twelve for the community caused them to neglect their proclaiming the kerygma.⁷⁶ There follows the first proposition of the Twelve, presented in the imperative that the community must choose the group who will take responsibility for the daily services (Ac 6,2). The order includes the precise number (seven) of those who should be appointed, and it also contains three requirements of the candidates (Ac 6,3a).⁷⁷ There is then a second proposition of the Twelve concerning the apostles' acceptances of the elected ones (Ac 6,3b). The last part of the speech contains another statement, this time given in positive terms that the only duty of the Twelve is to pray and to proclaim the word of God (Ac 6,4). The proposal of the Twelve was accepted and the group of the seven was established (Ac 6,5–6).⁷⁸

The speech has a simple chiasmic structure A-B-B¹-A¹, where A is the *proemium* (v. 2); B is the first *propositio* (v. 3a); B¹ is the second *propositio* (v. 3b); and A¹ is the *epilogue* (v. 4).⁷⁹ This structure shows that the main aim of the speech is to indicate the establishment of the institution of the seven deacons.

73 The term μαθητής—the *disciple* as referring to the believers and not only to the Twelve, appears also in Ac 6,7, 11,26. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 345.

74 Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*, 55.

75 The term Ἑλληνιστής—*Hellenists* is a new term introduced by Luke, which raises a question concerning its meaning. For an extensive discussion of the problem see Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 240–247. We follow here the definition of the term offered by John Chrysostom in his “Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles, 14” (ed. P. Schaff, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, vol. 9 [Edinburgh: Eerdmans, 1994], 87–94). See also, H. Windisch, “Ἑλλήν,” in *TDNT*, vol. 2, 504–516.

76 Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 103.

77 The number seven is not accidental. The officials of the local Jewish communities consisted of seven members (*Bell.* 2.571). Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 45.

78 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 343–345.

79 A—(v. 2)—*So the Twelve called the community of the disciples together and addressed them, “It would not be right for us to neglect the word of God to wait on table;*

4.2 *The Meaning of the Speech*

For an understanding of this early stage of the community of the disciples (including all the believers in Jesus) the speech is of crucial importance, since it contains much important information concerning the structure of the group, the problems faced by the group, and the self-understanding of the group. First, the speech shows that at the earliest stage the Christian⁸⁰ group in Jerusalem consisted of Jews from the Diaspora (Hellenists) and Jews from Palestine (Hebrews).⁸¹ There were some tensions (v. 1) between both groups concerning the social service provided by the Twelve to the most needy (the widows).⁸² Finally a complaint about this kind of discrimination against the Hellenists was addressed to the Twelve, who recognised their responsibility for the problem. This was not caused by any ill-will on the part of the Twelve, but rather by the growing number of disciples in need, which resulted in dysfunction in the existing system of help.⁸³ The Twelve could no longer both proclaim the Gospel and at the same time provide help for believers in need, without being found wanting to some degree in each duty, and as a result they decided to create the group of seven with the specific purpose of service. In fact, this action points to the developing social structure of the Jerusalem community of the believers. The decision to create the group came from the Twelve, however it was the whole assembly of the disciples who elected the seven from among themselves

B—(v. 3a)—*you, brothers, must select from among yourselves seven men of good reputation, who are filled with the Spirit and with wisdom;*

B¹—(v. 3 b)—*whom we may appoint to this task;*

A¹—(v. 4)—*while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word.*

80 By the term Christian here we refer to Jews (Aramaic-speaking Jews) and Hellenists (Greek-speaking Jews), who believe in Jesus as the Messiah/Christ.

81 Cadbury thinks that 'Ελληνιστής—the Hellenist refers to Greek or to Hellenised Jews. H.J. Cadbury, "Hellenists," in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, ed. H.J. Cadbury and K. Lake, vol. 5 (London: Macmillan, 1933), 59–74. This understanding strongly influenced his interpretation of Ac 6,1–6. However, both the linguistic and structural arguments do not allow for Cadbury's own interpretation. For an extensive discussion concerning the Hellenists in Ac 6,1–6, see Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 240–247.

82 At that time the Twelve were responsible for the distribution of aid. Indirectly it shows that the problem was caused by the attitude of the Twelve, who were no longer able to provide sufficient assistance to growing number of the believers in need. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*, 56. In this context v. 2 seems to be a kind of an apology for their conduct.

83 This supposition is based on the following sequence presented in vv. 2–3, which shows a distinction between the Twelve and the disciples: so *the Twelve called ...*; it would not be right for us ...; *you brothers must select from among yourselves ...*

(vv. 3.5).⁸⁴ The names of those elected indicate that all of them were Hellenists (Greek-speaking Jews), with the exception of the convert Nicolaus who was a Gentile.⁸⁵ The decision of the disciples was accepted by the Twelve (v. 6), and henceforth the Twelve took responsibility for teaching and proclaiming, while the seven deacons were at the service of the believers in need. The omission of mention of Hebrews suggests that the seven, all Hellenists, are responsible for these matters both for the Hebrews and the Hellenists.⁸⁶ In the past (Ac 4,35–37) the Twelve, who were all Hebrews, took care of the material needs in the community, but now the seven, who all are Hellenists, take care of these matters, which may be indicative of a significant shift within the members of the community, as well as in way the community was functioning.

The speech shows that the Twelve were constantly aware of their main purpose, which was to proclaim the word of God (v. 4), and because of that, when the situation forced them to make a choice, they refused to be responsible for social matters and put this obligation on the seven, who were elected by the believers from among their own ranks.⁸⁷ However, those who are going to perform the service must fulfil the requirements (v. 3) and be accepted by the Twelve (v. 6). The Twelve established the requirements for election: good reputation among all members of the community, wisdom, and having the gift of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁸ These requirements were necessary to be considered acceptable in order to serve the community in Jerusalem.

84 Verse 6 suggests that the speech of the Twelve and election of the seven by the community did not occur at the same time. Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 103.

85 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 45.

86 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1259.

87 The number seven was required to constitute a Jewish statutory body. Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 103.

88 The first requirement concerns their good reputation among the believers since they must be not only elected by the community but also accepted by the Twelve as the leaders to whom the particular task will be entrusted. Those elected must be accepted and respected by the community in order to fulfil their task properly. To do so, they need also to show an attitude that confirms that they are under the power of the Holy Spirit, who enables them to live according to the lifestyle of Jesus' believers. The last requirement concerns their wisdom, which here takes the meaning of having practical skills to make appropriate decisions in time of difficulty and conflict of the interests within the community. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 231–232.

4.3 *The Function of the Speech*

The speech of the Twelve (Ac 6,2–4) is another “structural speech”, the function of which is to create the necessary background for the following narrative.⁸⁹ In this case it is the introduction of new persons who will be at the centre in Luke’s narrative concerning the persecutions in Jerusalem (Ac 6,8–7,60) and the mission in Samaria (Ac 8,4–40).⁹⁰ These persons are the only element that links the speech to the following narrative, since the topic of the speech differs from the preceding (Ac 5,35–39) and following speeches (Ac 7,1–10). These heroes in the following narratives are members of the seven designed for specific tasks, but later they will be presented as preachers.⁹¹ The analysis of structure of the speech shows that the main aim of the speech is to introduce the institution of the seven and offer a preliminary presentation of the elected members’ virtues.

Indirectly, the speech indicates the time when a new structural unit was created within the community in Jerusalem, as well as gives the reason for the development of the community’s structure. According to Luke the seven deacons were established to take care of the material needs of the community, in order to allow the Twelve to devote themselves to proclaiming kerygma and to prayer. This shows the secondary function of the speech, which derives in great part from Luke’s theological point of view. The speech underlines strongly that the main obligation of the Twelve is to proclaim the word of God (Ac 6,2,4). Concern for the material needs of the community is a secondary matter that can be managed by the community and does not require the apostles’ participation. Although the need for a new structural group within the community is caused by the social reality of the growing number of the community’s needy members, however it was proposed, regulated, and accepted by the Twelve (Ac 6,2–3). The leading rule of the Twelve is here made very clear.

5 *The Speech of Paul and Barnabas at Lystra (Ac 14, 15–17)*

The speech of Paul at Lystra is the second delivered during the first mission journey. In contrast to the speech to the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles

89 J. Lienhard, “Acts 6:1–6: A Redactional View,” *CBQ* 37 (1975): 228–236.

90 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1250. Other “structural speeches” that have been discussed are Ac 1,16–22 and Ac 4,24–30.

91 Conzelmann rightly points to the fact that the position of Stephen as one of the seven fits with difficulty with his activities as described in Ac 6,8–14 (*Acts of the Apostles*, 44).

in Pisidian Antioch this speech is placed in a non-Jewish context.⁹² Since the addressees are Gentiles, the reason for the speech concerns strictly Gentile religious matters, and the contents of the speech fits the mentality of the Gentiles.⁹³ The speech would function as a second topical speech in the three mission journeys, if it were longer and more developed than it is in its present form. But if the speech is not a topical speech, what then is its function and meaning?

The text of Ac 14, 15–17

¹⁵ “People, why do you do this? We are human beings like you. We have come with good news to make you turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. ¹⁶ In the past he allowed all the Gentiles to go their own way; ¹⁷ yet he did not leave you without evidence of himself in the good things he does for you: he gives you rain from heaven and seasons of fruitfulness; he fills you with food and your hearts with gladness”.

5.1 Structural Analysis of the Speech

The speech is placed in the negative context of the problem raised after the healing of a crippled man in Lystra (Ac 14,8–14).⁹⁴ Paul and Barnabas, in order to prevent the crowd from venerating them as gods, make a short speech, in which they offer an explanation of the people's misunderstanding of the miracle (v. 15a). It is also summary of the kerygma as proclaimed in a strictly Gentile context (Ac 14,15b–17).⁹⁵ In the following context there is an account concerning an event, which led to Paul's being stoned (Ac 14,19–20).

Due to the brevity of the speech, which contains rhetorical forensic language, it is difficult to establish its structure because it lacks both a *narratio* and a *peroratio*.⁹⁶ It begins with an *exordium*, which is an address to the crowd

92 Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 164.

93 Bruce, *The Books of Acts*, 276–277.

94 Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*, 88.

95 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 426. See also: F.G. Downing, “Common Ground with Paganism in Luke and Josephus,” *NTS* 28 (1982): 546–559.

96 The lack of a *narratio* can be explained by a fact that the preceding context (Ac 14,8–14) serves as the *narratio*, making it unnecessary to repeat it in the speech. The lack of the *peroratio* can be explained by the general character of the speech, which seems to be a prelude to the speech at the Areopagus. Schubert, “The Place of the Areopagus Speech in the Composition of Acts,” 246.

(v. 15a).⁹⁷ This is followed directly by the *propositio* (v. 15b.c) where, first in a positive way, he declares that they are not gods but humans (v. 15b),⁹⁸ and secondly Paul introduces himself and Barnabas as preachers proclaiming the One, living and almighty God, who is the creator of the world (v. 15c). The last part of the speech is the *probatio* (Ac 14,15d–17) containing a presentation of God, not as a new god but as the One God who from the beginning is a source of all existence (v. 17). The fact that for a long time the Gentiles did not know Him does not mean that He was not present and active in their world in many forms of good acts, which took the form of natural events necessary for human existence (v. 16). There is no *peroratio* in this speech because the speech seems to be unfinished, although it is not interrupted, as is the case of the speech in Ac 17,22–31. However, the effect of the speech (v. 18) suggests that the speech of Paul originally may have had a *peroratio* that is not included in Luke's account of the speech.⁹⁹

5.2 *The Meaning of the Speech*

The reason for the speech lies in the attempt by the people to divinise Paul and Barnabas and to offer sacrifices to them because of the healing miracle they performed (Ac 14,13). According to the religious belief of the inhabitants of Lystra, they considered Paul to be Hermes and Barnabas to be Zeus (v. 12).¹⁰⁰ For Paul and Barnabas, both Diaspora Jews, the miracle was a sign of God's power and it should lead to the praise and honour of the One God.¹⁰¹ However, for the Gentiles in Lystra the miracle was a sign of the descent of the gods from heaven, taking on the appearance of humans to perform miracles. For both sides the miracle was a sign of divine intervention, but the interpretation of the sign differed due to their different religious conceptions.¹⁰² Paul, the monotheist, believed that there is only the One God, and that every attempt

97 "People, why do you do this?" (Ac 14,15a). Similar expressions are found in Ac 7,26, 14,15, 19,25, 25,24, 27,10. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*, 89.

98 "We are human beings, the same like you. We have come with good news to make you turn from these empty idols to the living God" (Ac 14,15b.c). The same attitude of Jews towards Gentiles' behaviour, although in a different context, appears in the account concerning Peter's visit to Cornelius' house (Ac 10,26). Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 249.

99 This fact directly points to the function of the speech, which will be discussed in connection with the function of Ac 14,15–17 (see below at 5.3).

100 Concerning the cult of Zeus in Lystra and Galatia see G.W. Hansen, "Galatia," in *Graeco-Roman setting*, vol. 2 of *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, 392–395.

101 Paul's miracle was based on the faith of the crippled man (Ac 14,9–10), in a manner similar to the faith of people who were healed by Jesus (Lk 5,20, 7,50, 8,48, 17,19, 18,42).

102 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 409.

to divinise a human would be punished.¹⁰³ Paul opposed the crowd, declaring that he is human of the same nature as they are, meaning here that he is not the message but only the messenger (v. 15a).¹⁰⁴ After confessing his human condition Paul then proceeds to proclaim the Good News, which in this particular context seems to refer not to Jesus as being the Messiah, but to the general Jewish kerygma about the one and only God. Without further explanation concerning the Good News, Paul directly presents the purpose of his attempt, which is that they might find the living God and forsake the useless worship of the gods (v. 15b.c). After this indication of the purpose, Paul continues with a description of the Good News he is proclaiming, which concerns the living God, the creator of the world (v. 15d).¹⁰⁵ Although there is no explanation of meaning of this statement, verse 16 suggests that according to Paul the living God is also the God of the Gentiles, whose ignorance was tolerated by Him in the past. However, the use of expression ἐν ταῖς παρῳχημέναις—in the past suggests that now this period is gone and the people of Lystra are called on to turn to the true God. This God is the One who is answering human needs by providing, from the beginning until the present, for what is necessary for life,¹⁰⁶ even to those humans who “go in their own ways” (v. 16), namely the inhabitants of Lystra (implying also the Gentiles in general terms).¹⁰⁷ The reference to God as the One who cares about the Gentiles (v. 17), indicates that Paul and Barnabas have in mind the universal concept of the God of Israel.

Although many ideas are presented in this short speech, none of them is developed further.¹⁰⁸ This prompts us to ask about the character and function of the speech.

103 Compare Luke's narrative concerning Herod Agrippa I (Ac 12,20–23). Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 2164.

104 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 609.

105 Probably Luke refers here to Paul's concept of knowing God from His creation (Rom 1,18–32). Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 111.

106 These arguments fit well with the agricultural context of Lystra. Hansen, “Galatia,” 385–387. The term οὐκ ἀμάρτυρον—without witness is a *hapax legomenon* of the New Testament. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*, 88–90.

107 The expression has the meaning of “customs” or “moral behaviour”. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 249.

108 The three ideas (God the creator; the living God, and God who can be recognised from the order of nature) that appear in this speech are elaborated in more detail in Paul's speech at the Areopagus (Ac 17,22–31), however they are presented there in more philosophical terms. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 110–111.

5.3 *The Function of the Speech*

In the short narrative of Ac 14,8–20, the speech (Ac 14,15–17) on the one hand serves as an indicator of two critical aspects concerning the mission among the Gentiles, which regard divinizing a human being and offering sacrifices to idols, and on the other hands it presents a basic theme of the kerygma proclaimed by Paul to the Gentiles, in which he presents God as being the God of all human beings.¹⁰⁹ In a polytheistic context, Paul had to begin his kerygma from a presentation of the one and only God, since the Jewish and Christian concept of God differed radically from the useless images of gods that the Gentiles worshipped in their ignorance (v. 16).¹¹⁰ In a very stressful context, Paul proclaimed God as being the only God, who is the creator of the earth, and who is the living God providing people with all they need for life (vv. 15,17). The speech presents the basic ground that needs to be established before Paul can start to proclaim the much more controversial part of his kerygma, concerning the resurrection of Jesus (Ac 17,30–31).

The speech gives the impression of being an undeveloped unit that, while serving the particular narrative (Ac 14,8–20), functions also as a preparatory unit for the account that is about to be given.¹¹¹ The content of the speech, which has some similarity with the content of the speech on the Areopagus, suggests that the main function of the speech is to prepare the reader for the account of Paul's speech to the Athenians (Ac 17,22–31).¹¹² Before Luke in Ac 17,22–30, in a manner fitting the philosophical standards, presents the most controversial part of Paul's kerygma proclamation to the Gentiles (the resurrection of the body), here he indicates the basic background concerning the Gentiles, which is their ignorance of the true God and their dependence on idolatry that in this particular case takes the form of an attempt to divinise human beings.¹¹³ Another possible reason for placing the speech at the end of the narrative concerning the first mission journey is that the narrative of Paul's mission journeys is about to be interrupted by the account of so-called Jerusalem council containing a group of topical speeches, which have little connection with the group of topical speeches concerning the accounts of missions. The speech at Lystra indicates a change of focus in Luke's narrative from a strictly Jewish context (mission and kerygma to the Jews) to a Gentile context (mission and kerygma to the Gentiles), and shows Paul's diverse ap-

109 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 409.

110 Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, vol. 2, 179.

111 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 111.

112 Note the similarities: Ac 14,15d with Ac 17,24; Ac 14,16 with 17,26–27; Ac 14,17 with Ac 17,28.

113 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 250–251.

proaches when proclaiming the kerygma to different audiences. The speech on the Areopagus will pick up again the theme introduced in the speech at Lystra.

6 The Speech of Gallio (Ac 18, 14–15)

The speech of Gallio is the first account concerning Paul's accusation before the officials of the Roman Empire, which may indicate the introduction of a new element in the narrative concerning Paul's missions. The Jews in Corinth accused Paul before Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia,¹¹⁴ of "*persuading people to worship God in a way that breaks the Law*". Gallio recognised this accusation as being a strictly Jewish matter that was not related to Roman law, and on this basis he refused to be a judge in the conflict between the Jews and Paul. This decision by Gallio gives his speech particular importance and it takes on a special function in the narrative structure of Acts.

The text of Ac 18, 14–15

¹⁴ As Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of crime or serious villainy, I would be justified in accepting the complaint of you Jews; ¹⁵ but since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own Law, see to it yourselves; I am unwilling to be a judge of these matters".

6.1 Structural Analysis of the Speech

The speech of Gallio (Ac 18,14–15) is the last part of Luke's short narrative concerning Paul's two-year mission in Corinth.¹¹⁵ Although Luke only wrote a very general account about this period, he presents Paul's achievement as a real mission success (Ac 18,9–11).¹¹⁶ This success aroused the opposition of those Jews in Corinth who did not accept Paul's kerygma and who were angered by his relative success within the Jewish community in the city (Ac 18,8.12). The final stage of the opposition was a decision of some Jews to put Paul on trial

¹¹⁴ Concerning Junius Gallio Annaeanus, see Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 622–623; S. Nash, "Galio," in *Dictionary of the Bible*, 481; K. Lake, "The Proconsulship of Gallio," in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. 5 (London: Eerdmans, 1933), 460–464.

¹¹⁵ Concerning the *Colonia Laus Iulia Corinthiensis* and socio-historical background of Paul's mission in Corinth, see Padilla, *The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts*, 135–151.

¹¹⁶ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 326. The external proofs of the success of Paul's mission in Corinth are his letters to the communities in this city.

before Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia (vv. 12–13).¹¹⁷ About the event, Luke gave three items of information concerning those involved in the trial. He presented the content of the Jews' accusation against Paul, which referred strictly to Jewish religious affairs (Ac 18,13). The next item is that Paul was about to give his defence (Ac 18,14a), but before Paul started the proconsul decided not to allow the trial to continue. Finally we are given the speech of Gallio, which contains the reason for his decision (Ac 18,14–15). Following the narrative of the trial Luke continues with an account of the reaction of the Jews, who blamed Sosthenes the leader of the Synagogue for the failure (v. 17).

The speech begins with a simple one-word *exordium* indicating the Jews as being the addressees of Gallio's words (v. 14a). It is followed by the *propositio*, which presents the legal ground for Gallio's attitude (v. 14b).¹¹⁸ In the *probatio*, Gallio refers to the strictly religious nature of the accusation as being the reason for his rejection of the case (v. 15a). The last part of the speech is the *peroratio* containing Gallio's final decision (v. 15b).¹¹⁹

6.2 The Meaning of the Speech

The beginning of the speech indicates the Jews, the accusers, as being the addressees of Gallio's speech. The lack of specific mention of the Jews should not be interpreted as an argument for the hypothesis that Gallio was hostile to the Jews,¹²⁰ because Luke refers to them in the same way in verse 12, and he even mentions that many Jews accepted Paul's kerygma in Ac 18,8. The general address (*exordium*) indicates that Gallio recognises the conflict between Paul and the Jews as being a strictly Jewish matter.¹²¹ Gallio was willing to consider any other case that concerned Roman law (*propositio*). The term ἀνέχουμαι—to endure, has a forensic rather than moral sense and means here “to accept a

117 Born in Cordoba, Marcus Annaeus Novatus was adopted by Junius Gallio and received the name Junius Gallio Annaeanus. He was brother of Seneca and friend of Claudius. His name is mentioned in a Delphic inscription. He was killed during the reign of Nero. See C.K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994–1998), 870; S.E. Porter, “Inscriptions and Papyri: Greco-Roman,” in *Dictionary of New Testament Background*, ed. C.A. Evans and S.E. Porter (Downers Grove—Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2000) 533–534; F.J. Foakes Jackson and K. Lake, eds., *The Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. 5 (London: Macmillan, 1933), 461.

118 The *narratio* is omitted because the context of the event was presented in vv. 12–13.

119 Padilla offers a different structure for the speech: *exordium* (v. 14a); *narratio* (vv. 14b–15); *peroratio* (v. 15c). See Padilla, *The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts*, 154.

120 R.J. Cassidy, *Society and Politics in the Acts of the Apostles*, 92–93.

121 It is worth noting that at this stage of the narrative Luke does not introduce the issue of Paul's Roman citizenship.

case”.¹²² He maintains a strictly legalistic approach to the case, which was the common practice of Roman officials, who did not judge cases outside Roman law.¹²³ Although Luke’s account of the Jews’ accusation against Paul (v. 13) is ambivalent and does not specify if it refers to Jewish Law or Roman law, Gallio’s speech makes it clear that Jewish Law is at issue here. Gallio argues (*probatio*) that the case concerns words, names and the Jewish Law, namely that the case has a theoretical character rather than being concerned with any action.¹²⁴ In this way he indicated that the matter was an issue for the Jewish community, which should be judged by the Jewish authorities since they possessed the privileges of *Jewish politeuma*.¹²⁵ These two arguments form the basis for Gallio’s final refusal (*peroratio*) to recognise the case as a legal matter to be judged by a Roman official (v. 15b).¹²⁶

6.3 *The Function of the Speech*

The speech ends the narrative concerning the second mission journey of Paul, which, although at first directed to the Jews, became in fact a mission to the Gentiles due to the Jews’ opposition and their rejection of Paul’s kerygma. Luke’s narrative mentions the account of Paul’s successful work in Corinth (Ac 18,8), which however had negative consequences since it created a conflict between Paul and the Jews in Corinth (Ac 18,12–13). The conflict escalated into Paul’s trial, however the speech of Gallio shows that the Roman official refused to recognise the religious conflicts within the Jewish group as legal issue subject to Roman law. This is the first and only account of Paul’s trial before a Roman official in the accounts concerning the mission journeys. Although the speech has a particular character rather than a general one,¹²⁷ it shows the general approach of the Roman juridical system in the Empire towards the strictly religious matters within the ethnic groups, including the Jewish communities. Because of the particular character of the speech, the function of the speech must be determined. In our opinion, the speech of Gallio offers

¹²² Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 328.

¹²³ There is no recognition of “Christian privileges” on the side of Gallio, nor is there prejudice against the Jews involved in his decision. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 153–154.

¹²⁴ Probably for this reason, according to Luke’s narrative, Gallio gave Paul no chance to defend himself. W.B. Winter, “Rehabilitating Gallio and His Judgement in Acts 18, 14–15,” *TynBul* 57 (2006): 307.

¹²⁵ Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2772–2773.

¹²⁶ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 630.

¹²⁷ Particular character refers strictly to Paul’s situation, since it is the first time when his case is brought to be judged according to the Roman law, what indicates that Paul’s opponents in Corinth (some Jews) seek a legal way to put his activities to the end.

the reason for which Paul was able to work in Corinth for a long time in spite of strong opposition from the side of some Jews (Ac 18,11.18). Since on the one hand the Roman authorities did not recognise Paul's action as criminal, but treated it as a question that pertained strictly within the Jewish community, and on the other hand the Jewish community in Corinth did not undertake any spontaneous or organised action against Paul, even within the privileges they possessed according to Roman law, he could continue his mission activity with considerable freedom. According to Luke's theological interpretation, in this way the promise of Jesus (Ac 18,9–11) was fulfilled.¹²⁸ Concerning its general character, Gallio's speech may serve as preparatory for comparing the two different approaches by Roman officials—Gallio in Corinth; Felix and Festus in Caesarea—in their use of Roman law, depending on whether the context was Hellenistic dominated (Corinth), or predominantly Jewish (Caesarea). The narrative concerning Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea (Ac 21,27–25,27) shows how great the difference could be. Gallio in Corinth is presented in terms that are radically different from the accounts of Felix and Festus.

7 The Speech of Demetrius (Ac 19, 25–27)

The speech of Demetrius is the first speech (Ac 19,25–27) in the section concerning the riot in Ephesus, which caused Paul's departure from the city (Ac 19,23–40).¹²⁹ In his speech, addressed to the co-workers, Demetrius presents the mission of Paul as being a threat to the cult of the goddess Artemis.¹³⁰ But was the defence of the cult of Artemis the main reason for Demetrius' speech and action? The answer to this question will show the true meaning of the speech and its function in the narrative here.

The text of Ac 19, 25–27

²⁵ "Men, as you know it is on this business that we depend for our prosperity. ²⁶ Now you must have seen and heard how, not just in Ephesus but almost everywhere in Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away

¹²⁸ Padilla, *The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts*, 158–161.

¹²⁹ Haenchen considers the speech and the account of the riot as a fabrication by Luke (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 576–479). However, Conzelmann thinks that although Luke composed the account, he was basing this on a real event (*Acts of the Apostles*, 165).

¹³⁰ Concerning the cult of the goddess Artemis in Ephesus, see C.L. Brinks, "Great is Artemis of Ephesians: Acts 19,23–41 in Light of Goddess Worship in Ephesus," *CBQ* 71 (2009): 777–785.

a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods.²⁷ There is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis be regarded as worthless, and that she whom all of Asia and the world worship, may even be deprived from her magnificence.”

7.1 *Structural Analysis of the Speech*

The speech of Demetrius is part of the narrative concerning the third mission journey of Paul, which was mostly devoted to mission work in Ephesus (Ac 19,1–40).¹³¹ The context of the speech is the beginning of a riot by the craftsmen of Ephesus initiated by the silversmith named Demetrius (Ac 19,23–40), and the main reason for his action was the consequence of Paul’s mission activities for their prosperity (Ac 19,17–20).¹³² The speech of Demetrius initiates the open opposition towards the Paul and his mission, because of economic reasons.¹³³ The result of the speech was the riot of the craftsmen causing disturbances throughout the city (Ac 19,29–34). The disturbance was brought to an end by the speech of the town clerk (Ac 19,35–40).

The speech of Demetrius is couched in epideictic rhetoric, which concentrates on the present situation (v. 25), although in order to achieve the desired effect past events (v. 26) and future possibilities (v. 27) are also mentioned. The speech begins with a one-word *exordium* indicating ἄνδρες as the addressees of Demetrius’ speech. It refers to the craftsmen of Ephesus (v. 25a) and not to all the inhabitants of the city. There follows the *narratio* of the speech (vv. 25b–26), which contains two statements relative to the present situation of the craftsmen. In first statement, he reminds the addressees that their εὐπορία—*prosperity* comes from their craft (v. 25b). In the second statement, Demetrius presents Paul’s mission activities in the region as being offensive to their convictions and customs (v. 26). In the *propositio* Demetrius points to two possible negative consequences of Paul activities (v. 27a). The first would be the loss of profit by the craftsmen (v. 27a), and the second would be the loss of prestige by the temple of Artemis. In the *peroratio* Demetrius emphasises the possibility that eventually the entire cult of Artemis could disappear (v. 27b). The speech does not contain the *probatio* and *exordium*, since as Soards says it

131 Concerning the city of Ephesus, see D.E. Aune, “Ephesus,” in *Dictionary of the Bible*, 413–415; P. Treblico, “Asia,” in *Graeco-Roman setting*, vol. 2 of *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, 302–357. See also: G.S. Duncan, “Paul’s Ministry in Asia,” *NTS* 3 (1957): 211–218.

132 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 656.

133 Concerning socio-economical background of Ephesus, see Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2879–2889.

is blunt, direct, emotional and without rhetorical merit,¹³⁴ what indicates the aim of the speech. Differing from logical argumentation leading to a constructive conclusion, it is aimed at touching deeper human emotions.¹³⁵

7.2 *The Meaning of the Speech*

Demetrius was a silversmith making the silver shrines of Artemis (v. 24a), which brought prosperity not only to him but to all the other craftsmen (v. 24b).¹³⁶ He gives the speech to the members of the guild of craftsmen, in order to make them respond to the immediate threat to their prosperity caused by Paul's activities in the city and region. It may seem that he spoke his mind directly and openly, explicitly indicating the economical reason as the basis for his action, however it is also possible that he skilfully used the most sensitive topic for craftsmen to earn their support.¹³⁷ The fact remains that the beginning of the riot had a very limited character restricted only to one group within the society, as is attested by Demetrius' reminding his co-workers that their εὐπορία—*prosperity* comes from the craft related to the cult of the Artemis (v. 25). In the *narratio* of his speech, Demetrius presents a subject that points to a threat to their profit (v. 26), since Paul's mission significantly influences in a negative way the silversmiths' prosperity. Demetrius refers to the knowledge (καὶ θεωρεῖτε καὶ ἀκούετε) of the co-workers concerning the effect of Paul's activities, not only in Ephesus but also in the whole region of Asia.¹³⁸ According

134 Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*, 103.

135 The speech lacks the two last elements of rhetorical speech possibly due to the fact that Demetrius uses pathos, by which he appeals to the emotions of the audience. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 590–592.

136 Luke describes Demetrius as ἀργυροκόπος—*silversmith*, a man of considerable wealth and social standing, at least among the group of silversmiths. He is the one who sees in Paul's mission activities a possible danger for himself and his co-workers. For this reason he becomes the agitator fomenting the riot in the city. Apart from this passage there is no reference to Demetrius in the New Testament. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2880–2881. Concerning the cult of Artemis, see G. Mussies, "Artemis," in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in The Bible*, ed. K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and P.W. van der Horst (Leiden—New York—Köln: E.J. Brill, 1995), 167–180.

137 Luke's account of Ac 19,17–19,24 suggests that the reason was economical, however if Demetrius was also a vestryman of the Temple of Artemis, he may also have had a religious motivation. This latter suggestion may be supported by verse 26 where Paul's activities are described in a manner suggesting that he had taken a "closer look" at Paul's mission, as well as by verse 27 where the economical reason is blended with new religious reasons. Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 207.

138 The phrase ὁ Παῦλος οὗτος—*this Paul*, underlines Demetrius' negative attitude towards Paul. Padilla, *The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts*, 179.

to Demetrius, Paul has persuaded a considerable number of the Gentiles by his argument that God is not made by human hands, leading them to forsake the worship of idols, presumably including that of the goddess Artemis.¹³⁹ The presentation of Paul's activities as a successful widespread movement serves in the speech of Demetrius to emphasise scale of the threat for the craftsmen's guild (v. 27).¹⁴⁰ Paul's message concerning the nature of God threatens not only those who make the images of gods, but also the existence of the temple of Artemis in Ephesus, and even the entire cult of the goddess in Asia and throughout the whole world. It is probable that Demetrius' words had little if any relation to reality, but since he plays the role of a patron-agitator, his words serve to rouse up the emotions of his co-workers.¹⁴¹ By mentioning two potential threats to the temple of Artemis (the temple may become unimportant; and consequently Artemis will be deprived of her majesty) Demetrius uses *pathos* in his speech in order to invoke the emotions of the audience in order

139 Paul's mission work, which Luke in Ac 19,17–20 presents as a success, is recognised by Demetrius as a real threat to the local tradition. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 658. Noteworthy is the statement about "gods made by human hands", which is similar to statements found in Ac 14,15 and Ac 17,24,29. This may be a key phrase used in proclaiming the kerygma. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 546.

140 In verse 27 Demetrius' argument changes from the strictly economic perspective to the social status of the guild ("*not only to discredit our trade*"), which is directly related with the status of the local cult in Asia and the whole world ("*but also to reduce the sanctuary of the great goddess Diana to unimportance*"). Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2886–2887.

141 However, from Pliny the Younger's testimony on the negative influence of the growing Christian movement on the economy of the region in relation to temple sacrifice, the words of Demetrius could be understood as reflecting a real concern among devotees of temple worship. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 804. Because of the aim of the speech, the credibility of the information contained in the text as well as the information contained in the subtext (the logical conclusion from the text) may be doubted, if not in regard to their historical credibility, at least in regard to their presentation. Concerning the mission activities of Paul, the speech of Demetrius directly (as explicitly written) and indirectly (as what can be deduced from the account) indicates several facts. Firstly, it attests to the reality that Paul achieved great mission success not only in Ephesus but also in the whole region of Asia by converting many Gentiles, who left the local cults in numbers significant enough to be taken note of by those who lived from the crafts connected to the temple of Artemis. Secondly, it indicates that Paul was actively arguing against "gods made by the human hands," that is, against a basic conviction characteristic of the Gentiles' cults. Thirdly, Paul's mission is recognised by Demetrius as the potential reason for the collapse of the social structure of Ephesus and the marginalisation of the local cult. Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*, 102–103.

to attain the desired reaction. The reaction of the crowd and the disturbances in the whole city proved his success (vv. 28–29).¹⁴²

7.3 *The Function of the Speech*

The speech of Demetrius is not the only speech in the narrative concerning the riot in Ephesus, since it is immediately followed by the speech of the town clerk (Ac 19,35–40). Both speeches form the greater part of the narrative (Ac 19,23–40), where the speech of Demetrius functions as the preparatory speech for the town clerk's speech.¹⁴³ The speech presents the socio-economical background of the particular social group, which became central to the opposition to Paul. To this deliberate action, which in the end took the shape of a spontaneous riot throughout the whole city, the legal authorities of the city had to answer (Ac 19,35–40), and this answer became another (following the statement of Gallio in Corinth) occasion for Luke to show the attitude of the local authorities of the Hellenistic world towards Paul's mission activities.

However, the speech itself has an important function in the whole narrative of Acts. This is the only speech in Acts that indicates the interests of a particular group of the Gentiles (in this case the economic interests of the craftsmen of Ephesus) as the main reason for opposition to Paul's mission activities. Luke in Ac 19,33–34 skilfully excludes any involvement by the Jews or any reference to Jewish religious controversy in the event. Although Demetrius in his speech used mostly *pathos* in his reference to the cult of Artemis, Luke clearly indicated that the main reason for the riot was economical (Ac 19,25,27).¹⁴⁴ This function of the speech, together with the speech in Lystra (Ac 13,15–17), where religious reasons were presented, and the speech on the Areopagus (Ac 17,22–31), where philosophical reasons were presented, embrace socio-economical, religious, and philosophical aspects of the Hellenistic world, which became the biggest obstacles in Paul's mission to the Gentiles.

8 The Speech of the Town Clerk (Ac 19, 35–40)

The speech of town clerk (Ac 19,35–40) is the second speech in the section concerning the riot in Ephesus (Ac 19,23–40) that resulted in Paul's being forced to

¹⁴² Padilla, *The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts*, 158–161.

¹⁴³ The narrative outside the speeches only extends to Ac 19,23–25a.28–35a.

¹⁴⁴ The speech of the town clerk makes this even more self-evident (Ac 19,35–37).

leave the city.¹⁴⁵ The direct reason for the speech is the riot by the craftsmen at the instigation of Demetrius.¹⁴⁶ The main concern of the town clerk, as seen in his speech, is to minimise the potential consequences of Demetrius' action, which could open to question the ability of the authorities to maintain order in the city.¹⁴⁷ However, the speech seems to be more than a mere example of a town official's speech at a time of social disturbance. The analysis of the speech will show its meaning and function in Luke's narrative concerning the event, which brought an end to the Paul's mission in the city.

The text of Ac 19, 35–40

³⁵ When the town clerk eventually succeeded in calming the crowd, he said, "People of Ephesus! Is there anybody that does not know that the city of Ephesians is the guardian of the temple of great Artemis and of her statue that fell from heaven? ³⁶ Since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash. ³⁷ These men you have brought here are neither temple robbers nor blasphemers of our goddess. ³⁸ If Demetrius and the craftsmen he has with him have a complaint against any man, there are courts in session and there are proconsuls, let them bring charges against one another. ³⁹ But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. ⁴⁰ For indeed, we are in danger of being accused of a riot in connection with today's events, since there is no real cause that we can give to justify this gathering.

8.1 *Structural Analysis of the Speech*

According to Luke's narrative the riot in Ephesus forced Paul to leave the city forever (Ac 20,1). It begins with the speech of Demetrius (Ac 19,25–27) who, driven by personal interest, spoke about Paul's mission activities as posing a deadly threat to the craftsmen's guild and the cult of the goddess Artemis.¹⁴⁸ The effect of the speech was the riot not only of the craftsmen (v. 28), but also the whole city was thrown into disorder (vv. 29,32). The crowd took Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's co-workers from Macedonia, and dragged them to the theatre (v. 29b). Paul wanted to face the crowd but he was dissuaded from doing so by his friend, an Asiarch who was a man of high social position in the city

145 R.F. Stoops, "Riot and Assembly: The social Context of Acts 19, 23–41," *JBL* 108 (1989): 73–91.

146 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 656.

147 Padilla, *The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts*, 182–183.

148 L.R. Taylor, "Artemis of Ephesus," in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. 5 (London: Macmillan, 1933), 251–256.

(v. 31).¹⁴⁹ Luke mentions that the Jews attempted to calm the crowd by forcing a certain Alexander to make an apology, but the crowd would not accept it.¹⁵⁰ Finally, the situation was handled by the town clerk, who calmed the disturbances with a short but incisive speech, in which with rigorous logic he exposed the lack of any legal footing for the crowd's assembly (Ac 19,35–40).

The speech begins with an *exordium* indicating the audience, who are the inhabitants of Ephesus (v. 35a). In the form of a rhetorical question the clerk presents the *narratio*, which includes the generally known tradition that the image of Artemis fell from heaven, and that the city was entrusted with the care of the Temple of Artemis (vv. 35–36). After calming the crowd the clerk presents the *propositio* of the speech, which underlines the lack of legality for the action of the crowd who dragged Paul's two co-workers to the theatre, even though they had not offended the goddess nor committed any crime against the temple (v. 37). In the *probatio* the clerk indicates that Demetrius is the reason for the disturbance in the city, and orders him to take proper and legal means to solve his private affairs (v. 38). In the *peroratio* the clerk informs the crowd that the assembly is illegal and to continue would have legal consequences.¹⁵¹ In order to avoid such problems the controverted matters should be presented to a duly summoned legal assembly (vv. 39–40). The speech is delivered with deliberative rhetoric, aimed at persuading the crowd to act in a legal manner.¹⁵²

8.2 The Meaning of the Speech

The town clerk begins his speech by addressing the crowd as “Ephesians” instead of simply “men” or “people”, which indicates the intention on the one

149 Scholars are not agreed on the political and religious function of the Asiarch. For the different opinions see R.A. Kearsley, “The Asiarchs,” in *Graeco-Roman setting*, vol. 2 of *The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting*, 363–376; Padilla, *The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts*, 172–173; L.R. Taylor, “The Asiarchs,” in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. 5, 256–262.

150 It is more probable that Alexander was about to make rather an apology on behalf of Jews living in Ephesus than on behalf of Paul. Luke speaks about an apology, but does not mention an accusation. Alexander's apology on behalf of Jews could concern the fact that some Jews had nothing in common with Paul and his movement. Johnson thinks that Alexander was about to accuse Paul, (Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 349). However, Luke's narrative concerning the period does not contain any open or widespread antagonism between Jews and Paul. Ac 19,8–9 refers to opposition and criticism by some Jews, but not to any accusation. Padilla, *The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts*, 352. See also: C.L. Brinks, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians,” 789–791.

151 The authorities of the city should be questioned or even punished by superior Roman authorities for illegal assembly. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 551.

152 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 598–599.

hand to gain the attention of the crowd, and on other hand to give a proper rhetorical introduction to the statement about to be made concerning the illegal assembly.¹⁵³ The main effect of Demetrius' speech had been to arouse social concern about the cult of the goddess Artemis, which he presented as being threatened by Paul's mission activities (Ac 19,27).¹⁵⁴ Although the majority of the crowd did not know the reason for the concern, all were ready to defend the cult of the goddess Artemis (vv. 32–34). The town clerk played on the emotion and popular piety of the crowd, and in the form of a rhetorical question he clarified the two most important things concerning the cult of the Artemis.¹⁵⁵ The first, with the words Ἐφεσίων πόλιν νεωκόρον οἶσαν τῆς μεγάλης θεᾶς Ἀρτέμιδος—the city of the Ephesians is guardian of the temple of the great Artemis, the town clerk affirmed that the city of Ephesus housed the important temple of Artemis.¹⁵⁶ The importance of the temple in Ephesus can be attested by the coins from the first century, which contains this title (νεωκόρος).¹⁵⁷ The second affirmation concerns the image of the goddess Artemis, which is referred to as διοπετοῦς—fell from Zeus, thus giving it a divine origin, and not a creation of human hands.¹⁵⁸ These two affirmations are the town clerk's answers to two arguments—that the cult of Artemis would disappear, and that the image of Artemis was made by human hands—used by Demetrius to incite the citizens to riot. To reinforce his counter-arguments, the town clerk in a negative way, but with a tone of authority, underlines this belief that is shared by every person in the city. The town clerk's opinion about the cult of Artemis in Ephesus and Demetrius' opinion concerning the matter are contradictory, and raise a question about the nature of the town clerk's statement. Luke's narrative concerning Paul's mission in Ephesus supports Demetrius' view of the conditions, since it indicates that a considerable number of Ephesians had withdrawn from support of the local cult. This means that the statement of the clerk was more axiomatic in character and used for the rhetorical purpose of

153 The term γραμματεὺς—scribe, in a Hellenistic context refers to the keeper of the records, or registrar, who was part of the local bureaucracy, and enjoyed a position of importance and distinction. Padilla, *The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts. Poetic*, 174.

154 R.F. Stoops, "Riot and Assembly," 73–91.

155 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2926.

156 The term νεωκόρος—the temple keeper, in Josephus' works refers to a functionary entrusted with cleaning and tending the temple. Josephus, *Bell.* 1.153. However, it became the title for cities housing the important temples. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 350.

157 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 598.

158 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 810–811.

dispelling any doubts about the place of the cult of Artemis in Ephesus and restoring calm and common sense in the city (v. 36).¹⁵⁹

The clerk's statement aims at establishing a basis for describing the nature of the crowd's action as *προπετής*—*reckless, thoughtless* (v. 36b). There is no reason for dragging the two men (Gaius and Aristarchus) to the theater (v. 37), since they are guilty neither of *ιερόσυλος* (robbing the temple), nor of blasphemy (*βλασφημέω*—*to speak injuriously*).¹⁶⁰ In this way, the clerk shows the lack of any connection between these men and the threat to the cult of Artemis, declaring, on the contrary, that these two men are innocent. As a consequence he indirectly overrules any religious accusations against them, and at the same time he puts responsibility for the riot on the shoulders of Demetrius. In this way, the town clerk presents the action of Demetrius as being illegal. According to Luke's narrative the town clerk draws attention to two important facts. Paul's co-workers are declared to be innocent without any investigation or interrogation.¹⁶¹ Such would be a fundamental requirement for the proceedings to be legal. We are also informed about the agitator of the riot, and his true (economical) reason for inciting the riot. The town clerk, faced with the crowd, rightly reduced Demetrius' riot to the level of a matter that was strictly private (v. 38). This kind of case should be solved in a legal manner during the court's session and in the presence of the proconsul (v. 38).¹⁶² After the clerk put the case of Demetrius versus Gaius and Aristarchus (and Paul) on its proper legal standing, he turns to solve the problem of illegal assembly (vv. 39–40). The

159 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2932.

160 Lucian of Samosata, in *The Passing of Peregrinus* 22, informs us that there were several attempts made to burn down the temple of Artemis at Ephesus. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 599.

161 They were cleared of any general accusation against the Jews about their unfriendly attitude towards Pagan temples, however this does not necessarily mean that there was a distinction between Gentile citizens of the city and Jews living in the city, which is supported by Ac 19,33–34, where the unfriendly attitude of Gentiles towards Jews is clearly mentioned. They were declared to be innocent of any insulting action against a specific local goddess, and in broader terms their mission activity was not found to be offensive to the local cult. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 661. The statements of the town clerk presented in verse 37 have much in common with the function of the speech in Luke's narrative concerning the mission in Ephesus. This idea will be developed in the following discussion concerning the function of the Ac 19,35–40.

162 The court is referred to here as *ἀγοραῖος*—*market place*, since the court session took place on fixed days in the centre of the district, and was presided over by the proconsul of the province. Luke uses the plural form proconsuls probably in order to indicate the general character of the statement rather than confining it to this particular case. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 811–812.

clerk reminds the crowd that all matters that were of concern to them could be discussed at the legal assembly ἐννόμῳ ἐκκλησίᾳ—*lawful assembly*, which usually took place at least once a month (v. 39).¹⁶³ This indicates that the present assembly is illegal, and that it could result in severe consequences for the whole city (v. 40).¹⁶⁴ Roman administration was highly suspicious of illegal assemblies since usually they were connected to riots against Rome. For this reason the local administrations were severely punished if anything of this nature occurred. The clerk's statement, then, was not merely a threat used for rhetorical purposes, but it points to a real danger (unlike the hypothetical danger imagined by Demetrius), since the event had to be recorded and that account would necessarily include reference to the lack of any legal basis for the assembly. This lack is underlined strongly and it serves as the kind of accusation against the illegally assembled crowd. It was they, rather than the mission of Paul and his co-workers, who put the city in the danger.¹⁶⁵

The town clerk throughout his speech keeps the city's interest in focus, rather than protecting Paul and his co-workers. This approach shows that the action of Demetrius was a danger for the city, despite its being a merely private affair. Demetrius' reason for the riot was recognised as being hypocritical, and it demonstrated his ignorance of proper legal procedure, as well as his lack of common sense.¹⁶⁶

8.3 *The Function of the Speech*

The speech of the town clerk takes two functions in the narrative structure of Acts, the first being to offer a reason for Paul's concluding his mission in Ephesus, and the second is to present Luke's general evaluation of Roman officials' legal conduct towards the mission activities of Paul. Concerning the first function, the speech that ends the narrative concerning Paul's mission in Ephesus contains two important details regarding the relations between Paul and the Hellenistic world. The first shows that Paul's activity met with strong opposition from some elements of the local communities. Although socio-religious arguments were used, the problems derived entirely from pragmatic and economic reasons.¹⁶⁷ It was not the kerygma itself proclaimed by Paul that brought the opposition, but the quite significant success of his mission, which indirectly influenced, or at least challenged, the economic status of a particular

163 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2937–2939.

164 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 350.

165 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 600.

166 Padilla, *The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts*, 169–171.

167 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 353.

and prominent workers' guild (Ac 19,38). The second detail indicates that social disturbance in the local community was the reason for Paul's discontinuing the mission. Although the administration of the city did not find any legal basis for an accusation against Paul's co-workers case, the riot showed that the hostile attitude of an influential social group, supported by a majority of the citizens, made it dangerous for Paul to stay any longer in the city.¹⁶⁸ It is not clear if Demetrius after this failure intended to take legal action against Paul, as the clerk had suggested he could, but this is very possible, and Ac 19,30–32 implies that his disciples and friendly officials in the city encouraged Paul to leave the city.

The second function of the speech concerns Luke's presentation of the legal attitude of the local administration towards Paul's mission in the Hellenistic cities. The speech of the town clerk shows that the administration at Ephesus did not recognise private interest, even if supported by religious argument, as being sufficient reason for irregular assembly. Economic reasons and private group interests that caused the disturbances are recognised as being the real threat for the city administration, hence Paul's two co-workers were not guilty of any crime against the local cult, and their private beliefs were of no interest to the magistrates of the city. The main concern of the clerk is the illegality of the assembly. Contrary to the speech of Demetrius, where Paul and his activities were presented as being a threat to the local cult, Paul and his movement are not the concern of the town clerk. This attitude should not be interpreted as suggesting any pro-Christian attitude on the part of the clerk, but rather shows the general religious tolerance characteristic of Hellenist culture.¹⁶⁹ The function of the speech is to indicate another element of Hellenistic world, which allowed Paul to continue the mission in Ephesus and Asia for two years. Religious tolerance worked in favour of the new movement (in this particular case for Christians), which met with no obstacles from the side of the legal administration of the cities. On the contrary, the obstacles and the opposition came from particular groups, which for different reasons opposed Paul and his co-workers.

168 The narrative in Ac 20,1 seems to support this interpretation. Also, the reason given in Ac 20,16–27 for Paul's avoiding Ephesus on his way back to Jerusalem could not be the only one. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 356–367.

169 At this point our interpretation of Ac 19,35–40 differs from that proposed by Padilla (*The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts*, 174–175).

9 The Speech of James and the Elders to Paul (Ac 21, 20–25)

The speech of elders to Paul shows him to be a controversial person in the opinion of the Jewish Christians of the Jerusalem community, and this presentation corresponds to other narratives concerning the relation between Paul and the Jerusalem community (Ac 9, 26–30, 15, 1–6).¹⁷⁰ The speech presents the elders of the church as being the mediators between Paul and his Jewish Christian opponents, in order to avoid problems expected to emerge as a result of the unfavourable reputation he had among the Diaspora Jews. This had been spread among the Christian Jews in Jerusalem and was based on a misunderstanding of the true meaning of Paul's controversial teaching concerning some topics that were fundamental to Jews.¹⁷¹ It seems that the speech has a special place in Luke's narrative strategy, which raises a question regarding purpose of the speech and its function in Luke's account concerning Paul's imprisonment.

The text of Ac 21, 20–25

²¹ You see, brother, how thousands of Jews have now become believers, and they are all zealous for the Law, ²¹ however they have been told about you, that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or observe the customs. ²² What is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. ²³ So do what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow ²⁴ take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. This will let everyone know there is no truth in the talks they have heard about you but that you yourself live in observance of the Law. ²⁵ But regarding the Gentiles who have believed, we have written them our decision that they must abstain from meat sacrificed to idols, from blood, from what is strangled and from fornication.

9.1 Structural Analysis of the Speech

The elders of the church give the speech in Jerusalem on second day after Paul's arrival in the city (Ac 21, 17–18), on the occasion of Paul's visit to James.¹⁷² The audience of the speech consists of believers who hosted Paul and Luke as well

¹⁷⁰ Although the speech was delivered in the house of James, the author of the speech is not James himself but it is attributed to all the elders gathered there. Schnabel sees here Luke's attempt to avoid connecting James to the events that would culminate in the arrest of Paul. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 811–812.

¹⁷¹ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 692.

¹⁷² Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 216–219.

as James and all the elders in Jerusalem (Ac 21,18). Paul gives an account of his mission in Asia and Europe, causing the elders to praise God for Paul's achievement (Ac 21,20), however it does not remove their misgivings concerning Paul's stay in Jerusalem, and for this reason and in this context the elders deliver the speech to him (Ac 21,20–25). The speech begins with a short *exordium* indicating that the addressee of the speech is only Paul himself. The next part of the speech is a *narratio* (Ac 21,20–21), which presents the present situation in the Jerusalem church (v. 20), including mention of the problem caused by the generally negative evaluation of Paul's mission methods (v. 21).¹⁷³ The context indicates that the problem lies within the community of Jews who believe in Jesus, and according to the elders' speech, there are three groups holding different positions. The first group consists of Jews who as Jesus' believers follow the Mosaic Law (Ac 21,20). The second group consists of Paul, who is accused of encouraging the Jewish Christians and the Jews living among the Gentiles to abandon the Law of Moses, and probably also includes those who follow his teaching.¹⁷⁴ The third group is formed by James and the elders, who play the role of mediators between the first and the second group. Verses 20–21 give a background for the *propositio* presented in v. 22, which is indicated by a rhetorical question and refers to the same subject (Paul) as vv. 20–21. The following verses (Ac 21,23–24) are the *probatio* of the speech, which presents the solution to the problem given in an authoritative manner by the authors of the speech.¹⁷⁵ Paul, together with the four Jewish Christians from the Jerusalem church, must perform ritual purification according to the Law. This is the elders' solution in order to avoid conflict within the community in Jerusalem. The last verse (v. 25) is the *peroratio* of the speech, which in fact seems to be out of place and has no connection with the speech. It contains teaching concerning the Gentiles, and is a modified repetition of the decree of the Jerusalem council (Ac 15,20.29).¹⁷⁶ Taking into consideration the fact that Paul took part in the council, this information addressed to Paul seems to be unnecessary. However, the use of the verb in the first plural ἐπεστείλαμεν—*we wrote* suggests that the

173 The subject of verse 20 and verse 21 is the same, namely Jewish Christians. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 180.

174 The authors of the speech take no particular side, as is indicated by the use of the third plural pronoun (Jewish Christians from Jerusalem) and second singular pronoun (Paul), but they attempt to prevent conflict between the two sides. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 693.

175 The verb in the second singular imperative (ἀγρίσθητι) is used here.

176 Witherington III argues that the letter differs from the decree of the council, and its aim was to clarify that the charge against Paul was caused not by his mission to Gentiles but by Jewish Christian criticism of Paul's teaching (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 650–651).

elders used this information, known to both sides, as their final argument addressed to Paul in order to make him act according to their wish. The context following the speech concerns the event in the Jerusalem Temple, which led to Paul's imprisonment (Ac 21,27–40).

9.2 *The Meaning of the Speech*

Before the speech of the elders begins, Luke gives Paul's account concerning his mission among the Gentiles (Ac 21,18–19), which, judging from the reaction of the elders (v. 20), was optimistic and focused on the successes. Immediately after praising God for Paul's achievements, the elders point to the other side of Paul's mission among the Diaspora Jews and the Gentiles, which involved some controversy about his teaching. After the elders addressed Paul as "*brother*", which despite the singular form dictated by the context was a formal greeting,¹⁷⁷ in verse 20 the elders in a very direct way explained to Paul the fundamental rules of the Jerusalem community, where Jesus' believers continued to follow Jewish customs and obey the Law. The term πάντες—*all* indicates that in Jerusalem this was a common practice followed also by the elders.¹⁷⁸ The Jews who believed in Jesus, living in Jerusalem (and probably throughout Judea), did not consider themselves to be non-Jews, or to be different from the Jews who did not believe in Jesus. The elders underline the fact that thousands of Jews who believe in Jesus are still zealous for the Law, indicating the large number of believers in Jerusalem, and the fact that all the believing Jews had a common lifestyle as Jews.¹⁷⁹ This statement serves as preparation for indicating the problem concerning Paul's approach that went contrary to the attitude of the Jerusalem community (Ac 21,21). Paul is known in Jerusalem (among the Jewish Christians) as the Jew who teaches Jews in the Diaspora to abandon the Law (the first accusation), by abandoning the signs of the covenant (the second accusation), and by encouraging them to change their Jewish customs (the third accusation).¹⁸⁰ Although the elders speak about rumours concerning Paul, the context (v. 22) suggests that it was commonly accepted in Jerusalem that Paul was encouraging Jews to abandon Judaism, and so he was calling on Jews to

177 Soards, *The Speeches in Acts*, 110.

178 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 585–586.

179 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3119–3124.

180 Verse 21 mentions also Gentiles. Sanders thinks that this can hardly refer to the "God-fearers", but rather it refers to Jews living among Gentiles. J.T. Sanders, "Who is a Jew and Who is a Gentile in the Book of Acts," *NTS* 37 (1991): 447.

become non-Jews.¹⁸¹ Based on the knowledge of Paul's letters, we know that this widespread opinion had nothing to do with the real Paul's teaching.¹⁸² In this case the opinion circulating among the believers in Jerusalem can be interpreted in two ways. According to the first possible interpretation Paul had many opponents actively challenging him not only in the mission territory but also spreading (with success) their negative opinion about Paul among believers in Jerusalem, the most prestigious community of Jesus' followers.¹⁸³ The second possible interpretation of verse 21 is that the community in Jerusalem did not yet know of Paul's teaching concerning the relationship between the Law and faith, or that they failed to understand or to accept his teaching concerning justification.¹⁸⁴ This would refer to the members of the Jerusalem community other than the elders, because Luke presents the elders in a neutral light, as those who present the opinion of others.¹⁸⁵

The short verse 22 containing a rhetorical question offers the interesting information that the elders were aware of the danger of Paul's visit to Jerusalem, which made them deliver this speech and require that Paul should act according to their will (Ac 21,23–24).¹⁸⁶ Were they afraid for Paul's life or more concerned about possible disturbances in the community? Verse 24b supports the second possibility, and it indicates that the possible danger could come from the side of some of Jesus' believers in Jerusalem.¹⁸⁷ In order to solve the problem the elders ordered Paul to participate in the community, partly by helping financially the four believers to fulfil their Nazarite vows, and also fulfil his purification ritual (Ac 21,23).¹⁸⁸ In this way Paul would prove to the members of the Jerusalem church that he himself had not abandoned the Law, but was still obeying it, thus excluding the suspicion the he is teaching against the Law,

181 The present tense of διδάσκεις suggests something still on-going. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 874.

182 Before this there is no mention of such an accusation in Luke's narrative in Acts. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 375.

183 This interpretation is based on Luke's historical account concerning Paul mission activities. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 874.

184 This interpretation is based on Paul's teaching as found in his letters, and it reinforces the conclusion that the Acts of the Apostles are Luke's narrative composition. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 180.

185 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 180.

186 The rhetorical question is a device used to prepare the reader for the following answer. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3132–3133.

187 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 650.

188 Paul did not take the Nazarite vow. He only fulfils the purification ritual required of all Jews returning from abroad. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 611–12.

circumcision and other Jewish customs, and showing that all accusations concerning his mission among the Jews in diaspora are without any basis in fact (Ac 21,24).

In verse 25, the speech seems to turn to a new topic, which has no connection with the previous parts of the speech. The teaching concerns the Gentiles, and in fact it is a repetition of some parts of the decree of the Jerusalem council, which hardly fits the topic of the present speech.¹⁸⁹ However, if we take verse 25 as the final argument of the elders in their presentation of the problem and its solution, the quotation of the decree indicates that the Jerusalem community respected the differences of Gentile Christians, only requiring of them obedience to some parts of the Law that were necessary to enable relations (such as unity at the table) possible between Gentile and Jewish Christians. If Gentile Christians are obliged to obey some part of the Law, then the Jewish Christians (particularly Paul in this case) are obliged to obey the Law. The message that the elders want to give is that Jewish Christians should follow the Law and the customs of the Jews, particularly in places and communities that are more strictly Jewish. However, not all that is required of Jewish Christians is also required of Gentile Christians.¹⁹⁰

9.3 *The Function of the Speech*

The speech of the elders is another structural speech that has no direct relation to the speeches contained in the section concerning Paul's trial and his imprisonment (Ac 21–28). The speech has no direct connection with the topical speeches of the section Ac 22,1–23,35, but it serves as a necessary preparation in order to clarify the relation between the elders of the Jerusalem community and Paul, before the narrative concerning Paul's imprisonment begins. Jewish Christians in Jerusalem were aware of the adverse account Paul spread by his opponents from Asia, and consequently some of them (excluding the elders) harboured suspicions concerning Paul's interpretation of the Scripture and his attitude towards the Law of Moses. The speech gives no ground for assuming that the elders believed the accusations against Paul, and the reason and the aim of their speech was to prevent potential conflict within the community, which could also endanger Paul himself. The elders required Paul to prove openly that he follows Jewish Law and customs (Ac 21,24), which in their opinion

189 The Gentiles do not have to obey the Law or follow Jewish customs, but they must abandon everything that is connected with idolatry (Ac 15,29). This version of the Jerusalem decree has changed the order of prohibition, and it does not contain the "golden rule". Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 376.

190 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 877.

should convince Jewish Christians in Jerusalem that all the accusations made against him were baseless. According to Luke's account, from the beginning to the end of his mission career, Paul had to contend with such suspicion, accusation, misunderstanding and difficulties from the side of both Jews and Jewish Christians,¹⁹¹ and the community in Jerusalem was no exception. The function of the speech is to indicate that in spite of some suspicions towards Paul, the members of the Jerusalem community took no action against Paul and they were not involved in the event leading to Paul's imprisonment (Ac 21,27–40).¹⁹² The elders of the Jerusalem community secured Paul's position among the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, but it was beyond their power, or more probably beyond their full understanding of the complexity of the problem concerning Paul's mission activities, to protect him from the antagonism of the Diaspora Jews who did not believe in Jesus.¹⁹³

10 The Second Speech of Festus (Ac 25, 24–27)

The second speech of Festus concerns the case of Paul, which for the recently arrived new procurator was a very annoying and complicated situation. On the one hand the accusation against Paul concerned Jewish religious matters completely unknown to Festus, and on other hand Paul possessed Roman citizenship, which gave him the right to appeal to Caesarea for a fair trial.¹⁹⁴ Paul's request put the governor in a difficult situation because he was required to write a report containing a description of the prisoner's crime that would justify a trial in Rome, and also an explanation of the reason for the appeal.¹⁹⁵ The narrative in Ac 25,1–22 clearly shows that Festus was unable to provide any of the information required for the report, forcing him to seek help from Herod Agrippa II, the last king of the Jews. In his first speech Festus presented the case of Paul only to Herod Agrippa II and Bernice (Ac 25,14–21), and now he gives the speech to the king and all the dignitaries of the city of Caesarea pres-

191 This aspect of Paul's biography is attested even stronger in Paul's writings (cf. Gal 2).

192 The next section, the events at the Jerusalem Temple, begins with the indication of the initiators of Paul's arrest, who do not include the members of the Jerusalem community (Ac 21,27). Concerning this problem see Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 377–380.

193 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 378.

194 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 654–655.

195 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 207.

ent in the audience chamber (Ac 25,24–27).¹⁹⁶ This gives the speech a very official character and at the same time it raises a question concerning the function of the speech in Luke's narrative structure in Acts.

The text of Ac 25, 24–27

²⁴ Then Festus said, "King Agrippa, and all here present with us, you see this man about whom the entire Jewish community has petitioned me, both in Jerusalem and here, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. ²⁵ But I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, however he himself appealed to the Emperor, and I decided to send him. ²⁶ But I have nothing definite about him to write to my sovereign. Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and before you in particular, King Agrippa, so that after we have examined him, I may have something to write. ²⁷ For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner without indicating the charges against him.

10.1 Structural Analysis of the Speech

The second speech of Festus (Ac 25,24–27) is placed in the context of the official investigation of Paul before Festus, Herod Agrippa II, Bernice, the commanders and city notables, which took place in the audience chamber in Caesarea, with all splendours characteristic of the royal court. The preceding context of this speech is the first speech of Festus before the king Agrippa II and Bernice (Ac 25,14–21), and the following context is Paul's speech before king Agrippa II (Ac 26,1–29). The speech contains deliberative rhetoric intended to help Festus to get assistance in the process of creating sufficient documentation for Caesar.¹⁹⁷ The speech begins with an *exordium* with Festus particularly addressing first Herod Agrippa II and then the others (v. 24a).¹⁹⁸ It is followed by the *narratio* (v. 24b), where Festus indicates that Jews from Jerusalem and Caesarea not only accused Paul but even demanded his condemnation. In the *propositio* (v. 25) Festus states that he found Paul guilty of no crime, but that he had nevertheless appealed to Caesar, and the appeal was well founded. In the *probatio*

196 Both speeches take the form of a recapitulation of the event presented by Luke in Ac 25,1–12. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 429.

197 Padilla finds no particular rhetorical device in this speech (*The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts*, 229–230). However, the main aim of Festus' speech is to present his need of their assistance, from which we can conclude that the speech contains deliberative rhetoric.

198 The mention in particular of Festus, Herod Agrippa, the tribunes and other dignitaries of Caesarea, shows that this assembly was of a very legal nature. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3485–3486.

(v. 26), Festus gives the reason for the investigation, which in fact, from the legal point of view, has no basis since Paul's appeal has been made and accepted as legitimate. The reason lies in Festus' own need to find sufficient explanation for Paul's case, which he could use in his report to Caesar as a reasonable proof of proper conduct on his part as a judge. In the *peroratio* Festus rightly concludes that it would be dangerous for him to send to Caesar a prisoner without any clear accusations (v. 27).¹⁹⁹

The speech has chiastic structure (A-B-A¹), where: A (v. 24) presents the accusation against Paul; B (v. 25) gives Festus' judgment on the Jews' accusation; A¹ (vv. 26–27) introduces Festus' dilemma in relation to the lack of a reason for an accusation against Paul on the part of a Roman official who is about to send a prisoner for trial before Caesar.²⁰⁰ Sections A and A¹ concern the lack of sufficient accusation against Paul, which naturally introduces the main concern of the speech presented in section B, namely, Paul's innocence.

10.2 *The Meaning of the Speech*

In the second speech (Ac 25,24–27) Festus does not give a simple summary account of Paul's case, as he did in his first speech (Ac 25,14–21), but he is seeking for a solution to a problem created by an unexpected turn of events (Ac 25,9–12). Festus begins the speech with the *exordium*, which includes the address to the king Agrippa and all Festus' guests present in the chamber (v. 24a). The direct address to the king in verses 24 and 26, together with Paul's speech before the king (Ac 26,1–29) strongly suggest that although the event had a public character the main focus is on Herod Agrippa II.²⁰¹ Next, in a short *narratio* Festus presents Paul's case in a summary fashion, but giving special attention to the public and radical character of the accusation (v. 24b). Not only in Jerusalem but also in Caesarea the “*whole Jewish community*” accused Paul (Ac 25,1–7) seeking for his condemnation (Ac 25,24).²⁰² In the *propositio* Luke presents Festus' conviction that Paul has committed no crime that deserves condemnation (v. 25a), as he had concluded it in the first speech (Ac 25,18);

199 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 734.

200 For a similar structure but with different conclusion, see Padilla, *The Speeches of Outsiders in Acts*, 229–230.

201 Verse 23 mentions also Festus' tribunes, who were probably in charge of the security of the meeting, and the dignitaries of Caesarea whose attendance was required by the king's visit to the city. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3485–3486.

202 The statement concerning the extent of the accusation against Paul is probably hyperbolic, since not all Jews were involved in the case. But the radical nature of the Jewish request should be taken literally since the emotion of the crowd is explicitly mentioned in Ac 22,22. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 1000.

however, here Festus directly, and in a positive way, pronounces his judgment concerning Paul's innocence.²⁰³ It is the second of three cases (Ac 23,29, 25,25, 26,31) in which Roman officials declare Paul's innocence.²⁰⁴ Without any explanation concerning the reason, Festus informs his hearers that Paul had appealed to Caesar and that the appeal has been accepted by him (v. 25b).²⁰⁵ The fact that the prisoner, without being condemned, appealed to Caesar created a problem for Festus who needed to write a sufficient explanation concerning his decision to recognise the appeal.²⁰⁶ Since Festus was convinced (Ac 25,18.20) that Paul was guilty of no crime against Roman law, he seeks to find arguments for his decision in Jewish religious law, which he does not understand sufficiently and is incapable of making a personal judgment. For this reason he needs the help of the king Herod Agrippa II. This latter, well-versed in Jewish Law and customs, as well as Roman law and Roman customs, would find arguments to prove that Festus' decision was based on sufficient reason (v. 26).²⁰⁷ Festus speaks (v. 26) about ἀσφαλής—*definitive facts*, what shows his expectation concerning Paul's interrogation before the king Agrippa.²⁰⁸ In the *peroratio* Festus shows in a general manner his awareness of the fact that to send a prisoner to Caesar without sufficient reason could be seen as an indication of his incompetence (v. 27) and would influence his career.²⁰⁹

203 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 733. In the account in verse 25 Festus' version differs from his first speech (Ac 25,18–20), in which he expressed his inability to judge the case. It also differs from Luke's narrative in Ac 25,8–9, where the lack of a just disposition on the part of Festus is presented. However, the narration of Ac 25,8–11 refers to both kinds of crime, crime against Roman law and crime against the Jewish Law. Festus in his speeches (Ac 25,18–19.25) seems to concentrate only on crimes against Roman law.

204 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 427.

205 The declaration of Paul's innocence (v. 25) put Festus in a difficult situation. How could he explain the prisoner's appeal to Caesar? In this way, Luke in his narrative does not allow Festus to escape from the judgment of the readers based on the narrative of Ac 25,9.20. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 1000.

206 Together with a prisoner, the governor had to send a report called *litterae dimissoriae siue apostoli*. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 207.

207 Since Herod Agrippa II was educated at the court of the emperor Claudius and he was trusted by Nero, his opinion or verdict would be of crucial importance in such an ambivalent case. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3488–3490.

208 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 427.

209 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 726.

10.3 *The Function of the Speech*

The second speech of Festus has two functions: the specific function is to present Festus' problem and the way in which he hopes to solve it. This function is indicated by the structure of the speech (A-B-A¹), where section A¹ explicitly gives the reason and purpose of the speech. The conclusion of the speech, given in section B, is that according to Roman law, represented here by the governor Festus, Paul is not guilty of any crime and for this reason could not be condemned to death (Ac 25,25).²¹⁰ However, Paul appealed for a trial before Caesar, which created for Festus an unexpected problem, since he has to present to Caesar sufficient reason for accepting the appeal, as well as write a precise report of the investigation, which would clearly indicate that a crime against Roman law was involved. To give the true reason (Ac 25,9) would be political suicide, and to send the prisoner without sufficient explanation would show up Festus' incompetence (Ac 25,27). Festus' solution was to present Paul's case before Herod Agrippa II and the dignitaries of the people of Caesarea in the hope that they would find something that would serve as sufficient argument for the *litterae dimissoriae siue apostoli* that he had to write. The only reason for appealing to Caesar that could be used in this case, concerned Jewish religious matters, which by all standards was something that not only the local authorities but also Rome (Caesar) would prefer not to be involved with. It is questionable if a Jewish religious matter could be recognised as adequate reason for accepting an appeal to Caesar. In this difficult situation, the interrogation before Herod Agrippa II, a person who was well known in Rome, could be extremely helpful at least in two ways.²¹¹ First, Agrippa was competent to judge Jewish religious matters, and so his decision would be beyond dispute. Then, secondly, mention in the report of the name of Agrippa, would make the whole investigation acceptable in the eyes of Caesar as having been properly conducted.²¹² In fact, we do not know what Festus wrote in his *litterae dimissoriae siue apostoli*, since the conclusion of Paul's interrogation before Herod Agrippa II did not bring any real assistance to Festus' needs (Ac 26,31). This conclusion leads us to see a second, general function in the speech in terms of Luke's narrative concept in the section concerning Paul's trial before Festus, as well as Luke's general statement concerning Paul's innocence. In the narrative concept of the section Paul's speech before Herod Agrippa II seems to be irrelevant, because Paul was not found guilty of any crime by Festus, and the deci-

210 This conclusion is based on the narrative in Ac 25,1–22, where the legal investigation concerning Paul's guilt is presented.

211 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 427–429.

212 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 727.

sion concerning Paul's appeal had already been made, and hence the speech contributed little or nothing to the merit of Paul's case.²¹³ It is more probable that Luke put the second speech of Festus here in order to provide a reason for Paul's speech before the king. It has a preparatory function giving the reason for the last and most important speech (Ac 26,1–23) in the section concerning Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea, and at the same time gives the whole section (Ac 25,13–27) a structure more fitting to a narrative concerning the king. The speech, as already noted, also contains the second specific insistence on Paul's innocence.²¹⁴

²¹³ Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 460.

²¹⁴ The first official statement is given by Lysias at the beginning of investigation concerning Paul's case (Ac 23,29). The second official statement is given by Festus before the king Herod Agrippa II (Ac 25,25). The third official statement is given by Herod Agrippa II, at the end of the Paul's detention in Caesarea (Ac 26,31). Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 693.

The Function of the Speeches in the Narrative of Acts

In this last chapter, we will gather the results of the analysis provided in Chapters 1–3. Our purpose is to show that the manner in which the speeches are used has a specific function in the structure of Acts. In Chapter 1, it was shown that the Acts of the Apostles even without the speeches gives a chronological and historical account of the beginning of the Christian movement in the Mediterranean world. The logical conclusion is that the main function of the speeches differs from providing merely historical information.¹ This raises the question concerning the function of the speeches. In Chapters 2–3, we presented an analysis of all the speeches, where Chapter 2 contains the speeches, which we called “topical speeches” or “thematic speeches”. These speeches were separate from what we called “structural speeches”. The main principle for the distinction between the speeches was presence of a topic that is continued and developed in the other speeches of the same section. The analysis of the topical speeches in Chapter 2 shows that Luke arranges them into triptych-like scheme in which the first speech has an introductory character, the second develops this, and the third speech acts as a conclusion. In this way, a particular theological or legal topic is presented. Chapter 3 considers the structural speeches, which play an important role in the narrative structure of Acts, nevertheless they contain no particular topic that is subject to development in other speeches of the section.

In the following, the elements that have been analysed separately will be considered as a whole in order to bring out more clearly the narrative artistry of Luke. In this chapter, all speeches are presented in chronological order, but still with distinction between the topical speeches and the structural speeches, according to Luke’s narration that makes it possible for the reader to gain easier access to the results of the analysis provided in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. In

1 This statement is of crucial importance. Very often, the information found in the speeches is used as the basis for establishing chronology or biography. However, in some cases the information in the speeches contradicts that found in other New Testament writings, especially in the case of Paul. The context, in which the facts are presented in the speeches, serves a theological rather than a historical purpose. We should keep this in mind before we consider as factual any historical information contained in the speeches.

addition, after pointing up the function of each speech, the most crucial points of the speeches will be discussed. In the footnotes, we will refer to the pages earlier in the book, where each of the speeches is analysed.

1 The Speeches in the Narrative Concerning the Jerusalem Period

1.1 *The Structural Speeches*

1.1.1 The Speech of Jesus (Ac 1,4–8)²

The narrative in Acts begins with the event with which Luke's Gospel (Lk 24,36–53) ends. However, the event is presented differently in both sources due to the function they take in the narrative structures of the writings.³ In Acts, this event is the beginning of the account concerning the emergence of the Christian movement. The narrative of the event contains the speech of Jesus (Ac 1,4–8—a structural speech), which introduces the two main topics of Acts. The first topic considers the Holy Spirit (Ac 1,5,8), and it runs throughout the book presenting the Holy Spirit as being the agent of the most crucial decisions taken by the apostles and the Christian communities. The Lukan Jesus promised that the first people anointed with the Holy Spirit would be the apostles, and that the event was to take place in Jerusalem. The gift of the Holy Spirit as the sign of the eschatological era was interpreted by them initially in a manner characteristic of mainstream Judaism, but the words of Jesus show a new meaning given to the eschatological times, which regards proclaiming the Gospel rather than the restoration of the Israel kingdom. This correction of eschatological expectation links to the second topic concerning the mission activities of the apostles (Ac 1,8), which will start in Jerusalem and expand through Judea and Samaria to the whole world known to them. This second topic serves as a kind of brief introduction to the content of Acts in which the progress of the narrative concerning the mission expansion correlates with Jesus' mission order presented by Luke in His speech (Ac 1,8). In fact, the content of Acts shows that the mission started in Jerusalem (Ac 1,12–7,60), progressed to the region of Judea and Samaria (Ac 8,1–12,25, Ac 15) and finally reached the centre of the Mediterranean world (Ac 13–14, 16–28). The apostles will become capable of fulfilling Jesus' command, only after the gift of the

² The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 3, section 1.

³ Johnson thinks that the whole section of Ac 1,1–11 has a *recapitulative* character (to Lk 24,36–53) in order to indicate a transition to a new stage of the story, which in this particular case transforms the narrative concerning Jesus' life and deeds into an account concerning the first generation of Christian communities (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 28).

Holy Spirit is given to them; for this they have to wait in Jerusalem, and then they will become witnesses to Jesus, since by the power of the Holy Spirit Jesus will work and teach through the ministry of the disciples.⁴

1.1.2 The Speech of Peter (Ac 1,16–22)⁵

The narrative concerning the activities of the Twelve in Jerusalem begins with the account of the replacement of Judas with the choice of Matthias (Ac 1,15–26). The account contains another structural speech (Ac 1,16–22), which is given by Peter, who acts as the head of the Twelve, and it concerns the story of Judas' betrayal and Peter's call for his replacement. Concerning the person of Judas, Peter affirms that he was one of the Twelve, with full membership, but he was also the one who betrayed Jesus for money,⁶ with which he bought land, where he died in an accident rather than by hanging himself as Mathew reports (Mt 27,3–10).⁷ The case of Judas became well known to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who based on the story named this land as recorded. Peter explained this case as the fulfilment of a Davidic prophecy (Ps 41,9), which should be taken as the common practice of the first generation of Christian as they evaluated and interpreted their reality in the light of the Jewish Scriptural tradition. Concerning the replacement for Judas, Peter narrates some information, which describes self-understanding of the Twelve. The necessity for a replacement indicates that the Twelve were aware of their identity as the New Israel, build on the foundation of the twelve apostles as Israel built on foundation of the twelve sons of Jacob (Israel).⁸ The requirement put on the candidates shows that the group of Jesus' followers was bigger than only twelve followers, and the number twelve takes on a strictly theological meaning.

The main function of the speech is to give the readers of Acts the information that the group of the Twelve (the foundation of the New Israel) remains undiminished but is filled by the replacement by Matthias, a man who from the beginning was with Jesus and the apostles, although he was not counted as an apostle. After the replacement of Judas, the Twelve were prepared to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

4 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 101.

5 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 3, section 2.

6 N.P. Estrada, *From Followers to Leaders: The Apostle in the Ritual of Status Transformation in Acts 1–2*, JSNTSS 255 (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 37.

7 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 124.

8 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 12.

1.1.3 The Community Prayer (Ac 4,24–30)⁹

After the three topical speeches, Luke in his narrative concerning the Jerusalem period inserts structural speech, which takes the shape of the community prayer (Ac 4,24–30). The consequence (Ac 4,21) of the interrogation of Peter and John by the Sanhedrin was that the disciples in Jerusalem prayed for the strength to proclaim the kerygma without fear. It indicates that the Twelve and the whole community were conscious of an escalation of the problem and the approaching conflict, which cannot be avoided without disobeying Jesus' mandate. The polarisation of positions regarding recognition of the person of Jesus reveals another aspect of the believers' self-identity, who like the ancient prophets and the Lord Himself became the object of threats and persecution from the side of their opponents. Luke's comparison of persecution of Jesus with expected persecution of His disciples echoes his conviction in Lk 21,12, where the persecution of the disciples because of their faith is foreseen by Jesus Himself.¹⁰ Answering to this real threat, the community turns in prayer to God, in order to get strength to stay faithful to the mission mandate of the Lord. God heard their prayer, and sent the Holy Spirit, who enabled them to proclaim the kerygma in spite of the threat from the Sanhedrin. It indicates another conviction of the Christians that the power and courage for faithfulness to the Lord and the strength to face opposition comes from God, and it is a sign of His permanent assistance in their needs. In practice, the sign takes the shape of miracles and healings, which on the one hand strengthen the courage and boldness of the believers and on the other hand may earn credits for the opposite side.¹¹

The speech takes a preparatory character, since before Luke in his narrative turns to the account of the conflict between the Twelve and the Sanhedrin (Ac 5,17–7,60), he shows the source of the disciples' courage. The speech also serves another function in the narrative concerning the Jerusalem period, by dividing the topical speeches concerning the kerygma proclaimed by the Twelve from the topical speeches concerning the conflict between them and the Sanhedrin, which led to the beginning of a persecution.

9 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 3, section 3.

10 J.R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Luke* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2015), 599.

11 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 310.

1.2 *The First Group of the Topical Speeches*

1.2.1 The Pentecost Speech (Ac 2,14–40)¹²

The speech at Pentecost is the first speech in the group of three topical speeches (Ac 2,14–40, 3,12–26, 4,8–12.19–20) concerning the kerygma proclaimed by the Twelve in Jerusalem. For this reason, the speech takes on an introductory character, where the kerygma proclaimed in Jerusalem by Peter and the Twelve is presented. It focuses on the main topic of this group of speeches referring to Jesus as the Messiah (Ac 2,36). The central claim of the argument is mostly based on a Christological interpretation of the Old Testament text.¹³ The basis for the presentation of Jesus as the Messiah is the claim that the eschatological times have begun, what is attested to by the gift of the Holy Spirit given first to Jesus' disciples but addressed to the whole of Israel in accordance with Joel's prophecy. This prophecy was fulfilled by Jesus, who was crucified and died, but he was raised from the dead by God and he received a place at God's right hand. He is the one who sent the Holy Spirit upon the Twelve and upon all those who believe in Him, since he was established by God to be Lord and Messiah for Israel. This determines the function of the speech that is to present the kerygma about Jesus the Messiah, which will become the reason for conflict between the Twelve and the religious authorities in Jerusalem.¹⁴

1.2.2 The Speech in the Portico of Solomon (Ac 3,12–26)¹⁵

The second topical speech (Ac 3,12–26) in the section is given by Peter in the Portico of Solomon. Like the first speech (Ac 2,14–40), it continues the kerygma about Jesus the Messiah, however the development of the basic kerygma presented in the first topical speech is significant. Then, the first speech mostly concentrated on arguing that Jesus is the Messiah, who sends the Holy Spirit, since He was established by God to be Lord and Messiah for Israel, while the second speech provides more details about Jesus' rejection by Israel and a possible way to correct this mistake.¹⁶ Jesus, the Messiah, the servant of God of Israel, was rejected by the Jews, whose wrongdoing is underlined by fact that in spite of Pilate's attempt to free Jesus, they asked pardon for a criminal (vv. 13–14). However, God raised Jesus from the dead, thus proving that the de-

12 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 1.1.A.

13 Keener stresses that the speech does not follow Hellenistic rhetorical patterns, but the Lukan Peter uses the rhetorical style found in the LXX, and created by Jewish rhetorical tradition (Acts, vol. 1, 862).

14 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 126.

15 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 1.1.B.

16 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 204–205.

cision of the Jews was wrong. By the power of the risen Messiah, who is called the Founder of life, the blind man was healed.¹⁷ The miracle of healing is used here on the one hand as proof that Jesus is the Messiah and the Founder of the life (v. 14), and on the other hand as the indicator that faith in Jesus gives perfect health (Ac 3,12.16). However, in this speech Peter acts not only as a witness to Jesus' resurrection and the accuser of the Jews, but also as the man of comfort for those who did wrong. He acknowledges ignorance of the Jews as the reason for their wrongdoing (vv. 17–18), making it possible that their sin can be forgiven, if they will believe in Jesus as the Messiah (v. 19). Based on this faith, a second chance to accept Jesus as the Messiah will be given to them at the end of time, when Jesus will come again (vv. 20–24).¹⁸ The Lukan Peter's hope is based on the conviction not only that the Messiah was first sent to bless the chosen people, but also that in spite of His temporary rejection, Jesus and in Him God's blessing is still first sent to Jews, through whom all nations will be blessed (vv. 25–26). In this speech, Peter's Christology takes an eschatological shape concerning the Jews recognition of Jesus as the Messiah, strongly suggesting Pauline influences (Rom 9–11) on the issue concerning the situation of Jews after their rejection of Jesus during His first coming to them.¹⁹ It determines the function of the speech, which is to recognise the issue of Jews who rejected Jesus, the Messiah, as a temporary problem that can be corrected during His second coming, attested to by placing the problem of the Jews' salvation in an eschatological context (Ac 3,19–20).

1.2.3 The First Speech of Peter before the Sanhedrin (Ac 4,8–12.19–20)²⁰
The speech before the Sanhedrin is the last one in the section concerning the kerygma proclaimed by the Twelve in Jerusalem (Ac 4,8–12.19–20), and because of that it takes on a conclusive character. The reason for the speech is the same, as in case of the speech in the Portico of Salomon, however the case became the subject of the Sanhedrin investigation, what allowed the Lukan Peter for the third time to present the kerygma about Jesus, here focusing on a soteriological presentation of Jesus.²¹ Peter directly blames the Sanhedrin and whole of Israel for Jesus' death, indicating that His rejection is a fulfilment of

17 Conzelmann indicates that the term ἀρχηγός is paraphrased in Ac 26,23 as πρῶτος ἐξ ἀναστάσεως, which refers the meaning of the term to the resurrected Jesus (*Acts of the Apostles*, 28).

18 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 180.

19 L. Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, Grand Rapids—Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1988, 418–420.

20 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 1.1.C.

21 Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 93.

the prophecy concerning the corner stone (Ps 118,22). Peter presents Jesus as the corner stone of salvation, declaring that there is no other name (way) by which humankind can be saved. This soteriological statement indicates the necessity to believe in Jesus in order to be saved, a thought definitely not shared by the Jewish authorities. Disagreement at this point between the Twelve and the Sanhedrin is seen clearly in the Sanhedrin's prohibition to proclaim the kerygma, to which Peter indirectly expresses his disobedience. Shaped as a rhetorical question, Peter's refusal exposes another element of self-identity of the new movement that concerns the will of God as the only authoritative and final standard, criteria that he is ready to obey (v. 19).²²

The basic kerygma about Jesus, the resurrected Messiah of the first speech, the eschatological soteriology referring to salvation of whole Israel, and finally a strictly Christ-oriented soteriology with a universal character of this speech, sums up the general outline of the kerygma proclaimed by the Twelve. This kerygma was not accepted by Israel, represented here by the Sanhedrin, which led to an indirect declaration of disobedience towards the authorities of the Judaism, and consequently to antagonism and conflict.

1.3 *The Second Group of the Topical Speeches*

1.3.1 The Second Speech of Peter before the Sanhedrin (Ac 5,29–32)²³

The second group of topical speeches (Ac 5,29–32, 5,35–39, 7,2–60) in the narrative concerning the Jerusalem period, tells us of the growing friction in the socio-religious relations between the Twelve and the Sanhedrin, which led to the stoning of Stephen and the beginning of the persecution. The first speech in this group (Ac 5,29–32) has an introductory character. It starts with Peter's strong and fearless declaration to the Sanhedrin, concerning his decision to disobey them in order to stay faithful to Jesus' will, in a more direct and uncompromising expression that it has been presented in the form of a rhetorical question in Ac 4,19–20.²⁴ Here the statement is used as the basis for the presentation of all the kerygmatic teaching that has appeared in the first set of topical speeches (Ac 2,14–40, 3,12–26, 4,8–12.19–20), and now is repeated in the form of

22 Scholars often offer an analogy with the famous response of Socrates, as seen in discussions concerning Luke's narrative creativity, with possible influences coming from Greek literature. However, since Socrates' dilemma and Peter's dilemma were of the same nature (authority of human or authority of God), to those who maintained their freedom in the faith, the answer can only be one, which indicates rather analogy than genealogy between these two famous statements. Longenecker, "Acts," 778.

23 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 1.2.A.

24 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 98.

a short Christological creed. According to this creed, Jesus rejected and put to the death by the Sanhedrin (Judaism), was raised by God. He was established by God to be the founder of life and saviour of life in order to bring to Israel repentance and forgiveness of the sins. This clearly presents Jesus as "*the one who authors or pioneers salvation by being the first to rise from the dead*".²⁵ The last sentence of the speech gives an answer to the question as to the source of the boldness of Peter's statements in verse 29, since it indicates the duty of the Twelve to be the witnesses.²⁶ They do it because the Holy Spirit bestowed it on them, and on all who obey God by believing in Jesus. Indirectly it shows two things, first the fact that not only apostles but also all believers have to give testimony to Jesus the Messiah, and second the source of their courage, which comes from God's Spirit. The speech contains the basic Jewish-Christian kerygma proclaimed to the Jews in Jerusalem, which was recognised by the authorities of Judaism as unacceptable and because of that it was not only prohibited by them, but it made them willing to execute the apostles (v. 33).²⁷ The function of the speech is to sum up the apostolic teaching, which led the authorities to think about a more radical solution than prohibition.

1.3.2 The Speech of Gamaliel (Ac 5,35–39)²⁸

The direct result of Peter's speech (Ac 5,29–32) was the intent of the Sanhedrin to put him and John to death. Surprisingly, one of the Sanhedrin's members, the respected teacher Gamaliel, gives a speech (Ac 5,35–39) that saved their lives. The most crucial point of his speech refers to the possibility that the movement begun by Jesus can possibly be of divine origin, making opposition to His followers to be the opposition to God Himself. This point makes it possible to recognise Gamaliel as sympathetic to the way, or his recognition of the way as one authorised by God.²⁹ However, Gamaliel's action does not necessarily prove that he was sympathetic towards Christian movement, but rather it shows his more rational approach to the problem.³⁰ He used an argument invoking similar messianic movements from the recent past, which disappeared after their leaders were killed. It suggests that he thought the movement of Jesus was of the same nature, of human origin and would disappear soon without the involvement of the Sanhedrin, which by acting

25 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1219.

26 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 312–313.

27 B.R. Gaventa, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 108.

28 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 1.2.B.

29 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 43; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 226.

30 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 317.

impulsively could find itself in conflict with the people of Jerusalem, who supported the apostles (Ac 5,26). If Gamaliel really argued that the movement had divine origin, the fact that Sanhedrin followed his advice would mean that they also believed the same, what contrasts with the following narration of Ac 5,40–42, where no positive change in their attitude towards the disciples is indicated.³¹ Gamaliel's speech calmed the emotions of the Sanhedrin's members, preventing them from taking a decision that in the end could somehow work against them. The function of the speech is to indicate that, in spite of the opposition of the Sanhedrin and their severe treatment of the apostles, the persecution of the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem was not initiated by the authorities of the Temple by their official pronouncement of the death penalty on their leaders.

1.3.3 The Speech of Stephan (Ac 7,2–53.56.59–60)³²

This speech (Ac 7,2–60) is the last in the group of topical speeches concerning the conflict between the Twelve and the Sanhedrin, which takes on the character of a concluding speech, showing the results of the conflict between the Sanhedrin and the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. The speech that led to the martyrdom of Stephen (Ac 7,54–60), who although designated as the one of the seven (Ac 6,5–6), those to whom serving the material needs of the community was delegated by the apostles (Ac 6,2–4), also performed wonders, and was involved in discussions with the Diaspora Jews (Ac 6,8–15) that led him to be officially accused of crimes against the Temple and the Law by them. To these two charges, Stephen responds at the end of his speech in a bold manner, what raised their anger against him, however it did not yet provoke them to radical action against him.³³ Concerning the charge of speaking against the Temple, Stephen answers with a statement that was probably convincing enough for Christians, but not for Jews, that God does not dwell

31 Scholars often draw attention to the grammar of verse 39, which may suggest that the Lukan Gamaliel actually is thinking about a divine origin of the movement. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 235. However, at the same time they overlook the consequences of such interpretation of verse 39, the Sanhedrin's agreement with Gamaliel's advice (the end of verse 39), as well as the importance of the narrative context of Ac 5,26 and Ac 5,39–42.

32 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 1.2.C.

33 Luke used an expression "*they were enraged*" to expose the crowd's attitude towards Stephen, which is similar to the one used in Ac 5,33, where the attitude of the Sanhedrin towards Peter and John is related. Use of another expression "*they ground their teeth against him*" indicates that the grounds for radical action against Stephen were prepared. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 139.

in buildings. To the charge of speaking against the Law, Stephen in fact does not give any answer but instead he turns the accusation against his accusers, charging them with disobedience to the Law.³⁴ However, the major focus of the content of this long and well-elaborated speech (Ac 7,2–46) concerns the history of Israel from Abraham to Moses, where Luke's Stephen refers to the examples of Joseph and Moses who, although rejected by their brethren, became the saviours of the nation. This part of the speech serves here to present Moses and Joseph (the types) as the example of the rejected once, in order to present in a short but direct manner Jesus (the anti-type) as the rejected one, who was condemned by the Sanhedrin.³⁵ This very critical speech was not, however, the direct reason for Stephen's death. The reason was his claim that Jesus is now seated at the right hand of God, an idea that was blasphemy for the Jews (Ac 7,56). This claim led to the impulsive action against Stephen (Ac 7,57–58). Although the trial was held before the Sanhedrin, Stephen was not condemned to death by the decision of the Sanhedrin, but those who took violent action against Stephen were Jews from Jerusalem and the Diaspora. As the conclusive speech Ac 7,2–60 shows that the persecution of Jesus' followers (Ac 8,1–3) was not initiated by a decision of the Temple authorities but rather by the crowd's spontaneous reaction to Stephen's claim recognised by them as the blasphemy.³⁶

1.4 *The Structural Speech*

1.4.1 The Speech of the Twelve (Ac 6,2–4)³⁷

Between the speech of Gamaliel and the speech of Stephen, Luke places a structural speech (Ac 6,2–4) delivered by Peter before the election of the seven. A conflict within the community of Jewish Christians between those from the Diaspora and those from Jerusalem forced the Twelve to introduce an innovation into the structure of the community. The establishment of the institution of the seven shows the structural progress of the Christian movement, although this is not the function of the speech. The apostles decided to devote themselves only to proclaiming the kerygma and to prayer, since charitable duties saw them neglecting their primal task as ordered by Jesus. The seven to whom the charitable duties were handed over, were chosen by the

34 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1328–1329.

35 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 251 and 259.

36 Fitzmyer counts the Sanhedrin among Stephen's opponents, however the text of Ac 7,1–60 does not justify this interpretation presenting the Sanhedrin in strict juridical manner (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 393).

37 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 3, section 4.

community and afterwards approved by the Twelve.³⁸ The names of the seven suggest that all of them were Hellenists, indicating that in order to solve the conflict, the Twelve handed over this prerogative to the Hellenists, who had raised the question of unfair treatment. Probably for this reason, the first requirement for the candidates concerns their being in good standing among the believers, and then their zealous faith (filled with Spirit) and practical virtue that enables them to manage justly their duty.³⁹ However, the speech has a preparatory character and it serves as background for introducing Stephen (Ac 6,5), who becomes the central figure in the following narrative (Ac 6,8–7,60). Stephen is one of the seven, who take on a function of responsibility within the community because of their virtues. This characteristic of Stephen will be repeated in the narrative concerning his martyrdom (Ac 7,54–60).

2 The Speeches in the Narrative Concerning the Mission in Judea and Samaria

2.1 *The Third Group of the Topical Speeches*

2.1.1 The Speech of Peter to Simon (Ac 8,20–23)⁴⁰

The narrative concerning the mission in Judea and Samaria (Ac 8,4–12,25) contains only one group of the topical speeches consisting of three speeches (Ac 8,20–23, 10,28–29.34–43.47, 11,5–17), whose main topic is the gift of the Holy Spirit. The mission in Judea and Samaria is the second step in expanding the proclamation of the kerygma according to the schema presented by Luke in the speech of Jesus (Ac 1,8). The persecution in Jerusalem forced the Jewish Christians to flee to safer places where they proclaimed the kerygma and gave witness to Jesus the Messiah. In this way, not only those who came to Jerusalem could hear about Jesus, but the missionaries of Jesus (Philip, one of the seven) and the apostles (Peter and John) went to new places to spread the good news about Jesus. Mission activities were strengthened by the miracles and signs, which helped recognise the presence of God's power, and led people to faith in Jesus. The considerable success of the mission in Samaria forced the Twelve to send some apostles that the believers in Samaria might also receive the gift

38 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 349.

39 As the following narration shows, the duties of the seven were not restricted to the material needs of the community, at least in case of Stephen (Ac 6,8–15) and Philip (Ac 8,4–13.26–40), who were involved in proclaiming the kerygma. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 233.

40 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 2.A.

of the Holy Spirit (Ac 8,15–17). In this way, Luke clearly distinguishes between proclaiming the kerygma, which can be done by all believers (Ac 8,4–13), and the laying on of hands (Ac 8,14–17), which was reserved only to the Twelve. This latter prerogative is the reason for the first topical speech in the section. When Philip was successfully proclaiming the kerygma in Samaria, and the apostles from Jerusalem came to baptise the converts with the Holy Spirit, Simon, a new convert who previously was engaged in using magic, wanted to buy from the apostles the prerogative to baptise with the Holy Spirit. Peter's speech to Simon contains a rejection of Simon's attempt. The gift of the Holy Spirit is exclusively the prerogative of God, and He shares this prerogative with those whom He had chosen.⁴¹ Simon the magician is certainly not one of them, since instead of subordinating himself to the power and will of God, he desires to exercise a prerogative attributed only to God (Ac 8,22).⁴² Peter's radical refusal of Simon's request contains a severe critic of the new convert, which leads to his condemnation (Ac 18,21–23).⁴³

The main function of the speech is to indicate that the gift of the Holy Spirit is the God's gift freely given to those who were chosen, and it cannot be bought or sold. In relation to the following narrative and two speeches, this speech also has a preparatory character by presenting the basic statement concerning the gift of the Holy Spirit and its meaning.

2.1.2 The Speech of Peter in the House of Cornelius (Ac 10,28–29.34–43.47)⁴⁴

The second speech (Ac 10,34–43) in the section of topical speeches concerning the gift of the Holy Spirit (Ac 8,20–23, 10,28–29.34–43.47, 11,5–17) is given by Peter in the house of Cornelius, and it is placed in the narrative concerning the acceptance of Gentile Christians among Jewish Christians (Ac 10,1–11,18). According to Luke's narrative the whole event is arranged by God, who is active on both sides in order to make possible their meeting (Ac 10,3–6.13–16) and their understanding of each other (Ac 10,34). The speech consists mostly of an account concerning Jesus' life (vv. 36–38), the teaching of Jesus (vv. 39–40), and the presentation of the apostles as His true witnesses (Ac 39a.41–43), allowing

41 C.K. Barrett, "Light on the Holy Spirit from Simon Magus (Ac 8,4–25)," 293.

42 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 149.

43 Witherington III rightly thinks that Simon, when he attempted to exercise the prerogative to baptise with the Holy Spirit, was not truly converted (although Philip baptised him) in sense of changing his heart, mind, and way of living (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 287–288).

44 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 2.B.

us to consider it an exemplary speech containing the kerygma proclaimed to Gentile audiences.⁴⁵ However, the speech starts with the very important statement that from the side of God there is no predestination concerning faith (Ac 10,34–35), because He accepts everyone from every nation, whoever fears Him and does what is right (unlike Simon the magician).⁴⁶ The addressees of Peter's speech fulfil these conditions, since they obey the order of the angel (Ac 10,1–8) and they believe in the teaching concerning Jesus, to which Peter is witness (Ac 10,33). The speech ends with the message that all who believe in Jesus will receive forgiveness of sins, which directly is connected with baptism in Ac 2,38, and an expression of the universal character of redemption in the name of Jesus.⁴⁷ Although it is not a part of the speech, the faith mentioned in the last verse of the speech (v. 43) is also the direct reason and at the same time a condition for receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit as the narrative following the speech indicates (Ac 10,44–46). The order of the events concerning first the baptism with water and then the baptism with the Holy Spirit (Ac 8,12–17) is reversed here not by will of Peter but by God Himself (Ac 10,47). This was for Peter the sign that God accepted the household of Cornelius before he and Jewish Christians accepted them. The event offers two important messages to the reader, first the free will of God in giving the gift of the Spirit to those who believe in Jesus, and second the condition necessary to receive God's gift, which refers to faith in Jesus.⁴⁸ The speech has a progressive character, since after the speech Ac 8,18–24 has shown in a negative way that the gift of God is freely given by God only to those with the right heart, now the speech of Peter indicates that faith in Jesus (according to the kerygma proclaimed by Peter) is a critical factor, which makes the human heart to be right and to be ready to receive the Holy Spirit, even when it is a case of unbaptised Gentiles.

2.1.3 The Speech of Peter to the Hebrews (Ac 11,5–17)⁴⁹

The last speech in this section of topical speeches (Ac 8,20–23, 10,28–29, 34–43, 47, 11,5–17) is the apologetic speech of Peter (Ac 11,5–17) before the community in Jerusalem, which did not accept easily Peter's association with the Gentiles (Ac 11,2). The speech contains the summary of the account presented in Ac 10,1–48. The summary underlines God's intervention and the divine origin of the action undertaken by Peter, which in the end led to baptising

45 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 459–460.

46 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 335–336.

47 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 501.

48 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 194.

49 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 2.C.

of the Gentiles.⁵⁰ It is God, who by the vision prepared Peter for the event at Cornelius house (Ac 11,5–10). It is the Holy Spirit, who ordered Peter to go to Caesarea (Ac 11,12). Moreover, it is God, who by giving the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles attested to their faith (Ac 11,15–17). The whole line of argumentation serves the conclusion that baptism and association with the Gentiles was God's plan for Peter, which he could not oppose. It indicates the particular function of the speech, which is to present the gift of the Holy Spirit as being the main argument attesting to the validity of Peter's decision. Acceptance of Gentiles among Jewish Christian based only on their faith was not an authoritative decision made by Peter, but rather part of God's long-term plan, which was recognised by the head of the Twelve and finally by community in Jerusalem, when the same gift was given to those who came from Judaism and from Gentiles.⁵¹ His repetition of the Jesus' words (Ac 1,5) leaves the opponents in no doubt about God's will to accept Gentiles, which does not necessarily mean that all prejudices were immediately overcome.⁵²

The speech takes on a conclusive function within the group of topical speeches, since it indicates that the gift of the Holy Spirit is the most important guarantee of the God will. In the first speech (Ac 8,20–23) Luke's reveals that the gift of God cannot be given to those without a right heart, which indirectly indicates that those who are the subject of the two other speeches (Ac 10,28–29:34–43:47, 11,5–17), namely the Gentiles at Cornelius' house, are before God people of right hearts. Interesting is fact that the event at Caesarea, which had a private and limited character (the God's fearers), here is offered as general statement concerning all Gentiles (Ac 11,18).⁵³

3 The Speeches in the Narrative Concerning Paul's Mission Journeys

3.1 *The Fourth Group of the Topical Speeches*

From Chapter 13 of Acts Luke turns exclusively to an account concerning the person of the former persecutor, who after his conversion would play a critical role in bringing the good news to the ends of the world. Although Saul/Paul was introduced earlier to the reader of Acts (Ac 7,58, 8,1–3, 9,1–30, 11,25–30, 12,25),

⁵⁰ Keener, *Acts*, vol. 2, 1816–1817.

⁵¹ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 341–342.

⁵² Chapter 15 of Acts, as well as the Letter to Galatians show that problem concerning association between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians remained a challenge for much longer. Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 85–86.

⁵³ Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 340.

from here the Acts of the Apostles becomes in fact the Acts of Paul. This part of Acts can be divided into three thematic groups, where the first concerns Paul's mission journeys (Ac 13–14, 15,36–21,16), the second concerns the Jerusalem council (Ac 15,1–35), and the third concerns Paul's imprisonment (Ac 21,27–28,31). Concerning the first thematic group, we are given an extensive narrative concerning the life of Paul as the apostle of Jesus, which contains three topical speeches (Ac 13,16–41.46–47, 17,22–31, 20,18–35) and four structural speeches (Ac 14,15–17, 18,14–15, 19,25–27, 19,35–40). The narrative concerning each of the mission journeys contains only one topical speech by Paul, which first of all serves as an indicator of the major topic of Paul's kerygma proclaimed to the particular audience, however it shows also Lukan Paul's mission strategy and his rhetorical skills.

3.1.1 The Speech of Paul at Pisidian Antioch (Ac 13,16–41.46–47)⁵⁴

The narrative concerning the first mission journey (Ac 13,1–14,28) contains one topical speech given by Paul at Pisidian Antioch (Ac 13,16–41.46–47). The first mission journey, which originally was planned as a mission to Cyprus, but after the encounter with Sergius Paulus was extended to the territory of Pamphylia and Pisidia, was the mission addressed to the Jews living in Diaspora.⁵⁵ This factor determines content and form of the speech. This long speech, employing in the form of argumentation extensive quotation from the Old Testament, concerns the kerygma about Jesus as the Messiah.⁵⁶ The first element of the kerygma is a statement that Jesus is the Saviour of Israel promised by God to David (Ac 13,23–25). The second element concerns the rejection of the Messiah by Jerusalem and the authorities, which took the form of Jesus' condemnation (Ac 13,26–30). It is followed by the third element, God's resurrection of Jesus (Ac 13,30–333), further developed in the fourth element with its extensive argumentation for Jesus' resurrection (Ac 13,27). The last statement of the kerygma focuses on Jesus as the one Saviour of Israel. The Jews, because of human weakness (Ac 13,45) rather than because of religious arguments, in general rejected this kerygma. Their opposition forced Paul and Barnabas to proclaim the gospel to Gentiles, a classic example of the *modus operandi* of Paul, who first proclaimed gospel to the Jews (usually with little success) and, as the result of rejection of the kerygma by Jews, he turned to Gentiles (according to Luke usually more successfully). The main function of the speech is to present

54 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 3.1.A.

55 In the address of the speech (Ac 13,16.26), Paul mentions also those who fear God, which refers to Gentiles attracted by Judaism and in some way related to the Synagogue.

56 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 237.

the general message about Jesus the Saviour of Israel, proclaimed by Paul to the Jews (not limited to those living in Pisidian Antioch), which was rejected by them. However, the speech contains some other information of crucial importance for understanding of the Lukan perspective on Paul. The first considers Paul's mission to Gentiles that according to the Lukan Paul is a consequence of the Jews' rejection of Jesus as the Messiah (v. 46), which should be understood as a general statement referring to whole of Paul's mission activities and not as particular to the mission in Pisidian Antioch.⁵⁷ The second refers to fact that the rejection was based on human emotions and prejudice rather than on doctrinal arguments (v. 45), indicating its particular character.⁵⁸ The third concerns the interpretation of the Old Testament texts that according to the Lukan Paul proved that Jesus is the risen Messiah (vv. 32–33).⁵⁹

3.1.2 The Speech of Paul at the Areopagus (Ac 17,22–31)⁶⁰

The second speech in the group of topical speeches concerning Paul's mission journeys is given in Athens at the Areopagus during Paul's second mission journey (Ac 17,22–31). The second mission journey (Ac 15,36–18,22), although it was planned as a mission to the Diaspora Jews, by the will of the Holy Spirit (Ac 16,6–10) and the circumstances resulting from Jewish opposition to Paul (Ac 17,5, 18,5–6) turned into a mission to Jews and Gentiles. Luke in his narrative puts the focus of the mission to Gentiles, probably due to Paul's success in Corinth, however, the only topical speech in the narration concerning the second mission is given in Athens and not in Corinth. Placing the speech in the city where no major mission success was achieved indicates the function of the speech. The speech, in its form and content, is addressed to the most distinguished representatives of the Hellenistic world, namely the inhabitants of Athens, the city known as the cradle of Greek culture and philosophy. Consequently, the kerygma contained in the speech can be taken as a message addressed to the Hellenistic world, and it presents the way in which Paul approaches Gentiles, who have not had any exposure to Jewish culture or religion.⁶¹ The speech, delivered in good rhetorical style, begins with

57 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 106.

58 Some Jews in Pisidian Antioch opposed Paul because of their jealousy, but not all Jews and not everywhere opposed Paul for this reason. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 397.

59 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 412–413.

60 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 3.1.B.

61 With the exception of the last verse of the speech (v. 31), the contents of Paul's kerygma probably did not differ from the typical Jewish point of view concerning Gentiles religious, which already have been known to the Athenians, since the presence of Jews and

presentation of “God”, who although respected by the Athenians is unknown to them, and yet He is the source of all life and creator of the whole universe (Ac 17,22–23). He is not like the Athenian gods, who are in need of human service in order to exist (Ac 17,24–25); He is the one, who gives life to all nations under the sun and is the reason for their existence (Ac 17,26–28). The true and living God is not made by human hands as the Greeks think, according to the Lukan Paul, making it necessary for them to convert from the idols, which are not gods, to the only God, who calls them to recognise the truth by accepting the message proclaimed by Paul (Ac 17,30–31).⁶² The acceptance of Paul’s kerygma is of crucial importance since the only God will judge the world by the man raised from the dead (Ac 17,31). These last two statements were impossible for Athenians (Gentiles) to accept because they rejected both the idea of God’s judgement over humanity and the possibility of resurrection of the dead.⁶³ As a result, they interrupted the speech and went home (Ac 17,32–33).

The main function of the speech is to present the way in which Paul addressed his kerygma to Gentiles. He began with these elements of Jewish teaching (God the only one creator), which could be known to them since there were Jews in Athens. This typical, for Jewish teaching, presentation of God was planned by Paul as the preparatory unit for his presentation of Jesus, to whom the power over humanity has been entrusted by this God. The fact that the speech was interrupted boldly at the point when Paul introduces the resurrected Jesus as the judge over all humankind indicates that the reasons for the Athenians’ reaction were based rather on philosophical principles than on the religious ones.⁶⁴ In our opinion, in this way Luke indicates the main obstacle encountered in the mission to Gentiles, which Paul had to face during his mission (Ac 26,23–26).

3.1.3 The Speech of Paul at Miletus to the Elders of the Church in Ephesus (Ac 20,18–35)⁶⁵

The third topical speech in the section of the topical speeches concerning Paul’s mission journeys (Ac 20,18–35) is addressed to the elders of the church

their possession of the Synagogue is mentioned in Ac 17,17. It explains their patience in spite of obvious provocative tone of Paul’s speech, until the new and unknown to them element (the judgement by the resurrected man) came to the surface. Most of the statements found in this speech appear also in the Letter to the Romans, especially Rom 1, 1–32. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 701–702.

62 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 319–320.

63 Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 343.

64 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 146.

65 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 3.1.C.

in Ephesus. Ephesus and Asia were the main areas for Paul's mission activities during his last mission journey, which according to Luke's presentation was a successful period, a fact that is attested by the strong and active community consisting of Jews and Gentiles that was formed (Ac 19,10.17–20). According to Luke's account, Paul is conscious of the fact that it is his last mission journey, and as a result, he gives a farewell speech to the elders of the community in Ephesus, who are going to overtake responsibility after Paul's departure (Ac 20,18–35).⁶⁶ Paul begins the speech with matters concerning his work in Asia with a special accent put on honest conduct and devotion to his mission (Ac 20,18–21),⁶⁷ which is followed by his announcement about a trip back to Jerusalem and his expectations concerning the consequences of the visit to this city (Ac 20,22–24). Since the Lukan Paul expects his imprisonment, he cedes responsibility for the church in Ephesus to the elders, who as part of their duty have to preserve the unity of the community by preserving the truth of the gospel (Ac 20,25–32).⁶⁸ The speech ends with an exposition of Paul's attitude towards wealth, which never was the aim of his mission action, so his successors should follow his example (Ac 20,33–35).⁶⁹ After Luke presents the kerygma proclaimed by Paul to Jews in diaspora (Ac 13,16–41.46–47) and the kerygma proclaimed to Gentiles (Ac 17,22–31), now he presents Paul's teaching addressed to the leaders of the Christian communities in order to direct their conduct in exercising an autonomous authority over their subjects. The function of the speech at Miletus in the group of the topical speeches concerning Paul's mission journeys is to show Paul's achievement during his mission activities addressed to Jews and Gentiles. At the end of his mission activity Paul left the church capable of continuing without the support of the apostle. The speech indicates that in spite of many obstacles from the side of both Jews and Gentiles, Paul fulfilled his task (Ac 9,15–16), and built a community in which Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians could coexist. In a narrow literary context the speech refers directly to the community in Ephesus, however from Luke's narrative perspective this speech indicates a general characteristic of Paul's mission achievement.

66 It determined the form of the speech, where the teacher-disciple attitude is exposed. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2992.

67 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 366–367.

68 Lukan Paul uses the shepherd-sheep metaphor in order to explore on the one hand the obligation of the elder and on the other hand the kind of desirable relation between the communities and their leaders. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 862. The use of this metaphor may seem to be irrelevant for a community dwelling in the big city, however obviously the usage of it here serves to relate the obligation put on the elders by the teaching of Jesus. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3033.

69 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 572–574.

3.2 *The Structural Speeches*

The narrative concerning Paul's mission journeys contains not only the group of topical speeches but also four structural speeches, among which one is given by Paul (Ac 14,14–15) and three are given by Gentiles (Ac 18,14–15, 19,25–27, 19,35–40). The speech of Paul because of its contents is connected with his speech at the Areopagus (Ac 17,22–31), and other three speeches take on an explanatory character in Luke's narrative structure of the Acts by recording the circumstances of Paul's mission activities.

3.2.1 The Speech of Paul and Barnabas at Lystra (Ac 14,15–17)⁷⁰

The short speech (Ac 14,15–17) is given by Paul at Lystra, when the inhabitants of the city, after they had seen the miracle, wanted to make offerings to Paul and Barnabas, whom they considered to be the Greek gods, Zeus and Hermes. The direct reason for the speech was to prevent the deification of the two missionaries and to prevent the citizens from offering sacrifice to them. Since for the Jews deification of man was an offense against God punishable by death, Paul and Barnabas, without strong opposition to the Gentiles' god-willed wish, might have met the same fate as Herod Agrippa I (Ac 12,20–23). The speech, which from the rhetorical point of view combines elements of epideictic (Ac 14,15a) and forensic rhetoric (Ac 14,15b–17), concerns two subjects, where the first refers to the human nature of the apostles (Ac 14,15a), than the second refers to proclaiming the true God, who is the creator of the universe (Ac 14,15b–17).⁷¹ The first subject closely relates to the context of the speech, which exposes the idolatry of Gentiles as the main characteristic of the polytheistic religious system.⁷² The part of the speech concerning this second subject shows similarities with Paul's speech at the Areopagus (Ac 17,22–31).⁷³ The similarity is seen in the presentation of God as creator and ruler of the world (Ac 14,15b–17, 17,24–28),⁷⁴ as well as the purpose of Paul's teaching,

70 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 3, section 5.

71 In this speech, as well as in the speech at the Areopagus, the presentation of God is almost exclusively (probably with exception to Ac 17,31) Judaic in character. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 251.

72 The problem of the idolatry of Gentiles is also explored in an ironical way in Paul's speech at the Areopagus (Ac 17,22–23,29) and more directly in the narrative preceding the speech at the Areopagus (Ac 17,16).

73 Ac 14,16b is similar to Ac 17,24a; Ac 14,16 relates to Ac 17,27,30.

74 Although the presentation of God is similar, the way of presentation and argumentation differs, depending on the context of the speech, in case of the speech in Pisidian Antioch takes on a rather agriculture tone, whereas that at the Areopagus' speech takes shape of a philosophical discourse.

which concerns Gentiles' conversion (Ac 14,15b, 17,30–31). Such similarities can be explained by the fact that both speeches are addressed to Gentiles, what determined the topic, the existence of only one God, who is still unknown to them. However, taking into consideration that according to narrative structure of Acts, the speech at Lystra has a preparatory character indicating the topic that will be extensively elaborated in the speech at the Areopagus (Ac 17,22–31), the similarity serves as fingerprints allowing us to track the idea as placed in different parts of the narrative. The reason for this short preparatory speech (Ac 14,15–17) lies possibly in the fact that the narrative concerning the mission journey will be interrupted in the following narration by an independent unit concerning the Jerusalem council (Ac 15,1–35).

3.2.2 The Speech of Gallio (Ac 18,14–15)⁷⁵

This structural speech (Ac 18,14–15) was given by, the proconsul of Achaia, Gallio who resided in Corinth. The direct reason for the speech is the attempt by the Jews to put Paul on trial before Gallio (Ac 18,12–14a) because of a religious controversy between them and the apostle. The speech contains Gallio's refusal to judge a case concerning Jewish religious matters (Ac 18,15b),⁷⁶ in accord with general Roman Empire policy concerning involvement of Roman officials in matters concerning local religious issues. In our opinion, there is no need to seek in Gallio's attitude negative sentiment towards the Jews, since in cultural and religious crucibles like Corinth, involving the Roman juridical system in a religious controversy of any group, it would possibly cause more problems for the effective functioning of the system. For this reason, probably it is better to assume that Gallio acted according to state policy than according to his prejudices.⁷⁷ The speech is not related to the other speeches concerning Paul's mission journeys and because of that, its function must be found within

75 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 3, section 6.

76 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 623.

77 The opinion of Peterson, who favours the interpretation of Gallio's hostility to Jews, seems to be based on large generalisation concerning the relations between Jews and Gentiles in Roman Empire rather than on the strict contextual analysis of the text itself (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 517–518). The Roman sanction placed upon the Jews (Ac 18,2) was result of their involvement in disturbances, resulting in legal punishment, rather than systematic anti-Semitic action. Similarly, the attitude of Gallio towards Jews was a result of Roman policy, and it is less likely that it was rooted in his personal prejudice. The problem indicated in verse 17 does not necessarily support such an interpretation of Gallio's hostility, since it can be understood as another minor internal Jewish problem in which Gallio had no intention of becoming involved, this interpretation is further supported by lack of evidence concerning public consequences for Jews who acted against their own authorities.

the section concerning Paul's stay in Corinth (Ac 18,1–18). Because Luke informs us that Paul spent a year and a half in Corinth before the accusations were raised against him (Ac 18,11), and indeed after the speech of Gallio, (Ac 18,18) we can assume that the speech is in some way related to length of Paul's stay in Corinth. The exposition in Gallio's speech of the general Roman policy concerning local religious issues further explains the reason for Paul's extensive stay in the city, in spite of strong opposition from the local Jewish community (Ac 18,6.12–13).⁷⁸ In this context, the function of the speech is to present how tolerant Roman legislation was concerning religious issues and how this helped and protected Paul during mission activities undertaken in Corinth. Although the Jews in Corinth tried to resolve the problem of Paul through legal channels, this ended as failure, because of the Roman policy towards the local religious.

3.2.3 The Speech of Demetrius (Ac 19,25–27)⁷⁹

The third structural speech in the section of Paul's mission Journeys is given by Demetrius to his co-workers, the silversmiths in Ephesus, during the third mission journey of Paul (Ac 19,25b–27). The speech does not have any relation to the topical speeches, but it is connected with the following structural speech of the town clerk (Ac 19,35–40), since the consequence of Demetrius' speech, who incites the riot, is the speech of the town clerk, which ends the riot.⁸⁰ In his speech, Demetrius attempts to incite a large and integrated group of Ephesians, the silversmiths, against Paul, using arguments that portray it as a religious matter (Ac 19,27b–28), while the real intention is the protection of economic interests (Ac 19,25b–27a), threatened by the considerable success of Paul's mission in the city (Ac 19,18–20).⁸¹ In this context, the speech can be seen as an example of rhetoric used by an influential group of Gentiles in order to protect their social and economic position, on the one hand, and to turn on the other hand local society against those, who were recognised by them as a threat to this position.⁸² Since, in the effect, the speech became the reason for Paul's departure from Ephesus (Ac 20,1) and the ending of the mission in Asia Minor, it can be seen as example (which could be possibly recognised as a generalised pattern) of argumentation used by those among Gentiles, who op-

78 Johnson points out that Luke by the speech of Gallio presents Paul's case as strict intra-Jewish controversy (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 328).

79 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 3, section 7.

80 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2890.

81 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 802–803.

82 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 542.

posed Paul's mission. As Paul's speech in Pisidian Antioch (Ac 15–17) indicates the nature of the pagans' religion as one of the biggest obstacles in mission among Gentiles, and the speech at Areopagus (Ac 17,22–31) shows the philosophical obstacles, the speech of Demetrius points up socio-economic reasons for opposing to Paul's kerygma. Contrary to the case indicated in the speech of Gallio (Ac 19,14–15), where the problem concerns an internal Jewish religious controversy, in the case of Demetrius' speech, at least on the level of an official accusation, the problem concerns a clash of religions.⁸³ The Demetrius' speech is directly connected to the speech of the town clerk (Ac 19,35–40) that indirectly points to the specific kind of social circumstances, which forced the city administration to give an official statement concerning adequacy of the Demetrius' accusation to the real state of affairs recognised by the city authorities (Ac 19,37–38).

3.2.4 The Speech of the Town Clerk (Ac 19,35–40)⁸⁴

The last structural speech in the section concerning Paul's mission journeys is given by the town clerk to the crowd, whose illegal gathering provoked by the speech of Demetrius was disturbing the peace of the city (Ac 19,25–27). The town clerk seeks a hasty ending of the illegal gathering that has developed into a riot, wary of the severe consequences for the administration of the city had it gone even further out of control.⁸⁵ Before the agitated crowd, in as few words as possible he must present arguments that convince the crowd to act according to his wish. First, he acknowledges the undisputable status of the goddess Artemis (Ac 19,35b–36), the kind of statement the crowd wants to hear.⁸⁶ Next, he claims that the victims of the crowd's anger have done nothing that is a crime against the cult of Artemis (Ac 19,36), and the real reason for their offence is not of religious nature but economic (Ac 19,37), thus qualifying the case for legal trial before the juridical authorities (Ac 19,38).⁸⁷ According to Luke, the town clerk not only expresses authoritatively the innocence of Paul's co-workers (directly), Paul himself (indirectly) and the Judaeo-Christian movement (in general) regarding any offence against the local cult, but also indicates his full and clear knowledge of the true reason for Demetrius' action. This presentation may raise questions about the historicity of the Luke's

83 It is noticeable that in Corinth, Paul was able to stay for some time after the dispute, however in Ephesus, Paul was forced to leave rather quickly.

84 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 3, section 8.

85 Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 379.

86 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 599.

87 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 551.

account, however the historical record is here not the most important aim for Luke. The main aim that he is seeking by this account concerns explaining to the reader (Teophilus) a crucial statement within his narrative concept, that the authorities in Ephesus (in particular) and Hellenistic cities (in general) did not recognise the Christian movement as a threat to either the cult of Artemis (in particular) or any other pagan cults (in general). For this purpose, Luke places this statement as the centre of the speech, which ends with negative repetition (Ac 19,40) that there is lack of guiltiness against the cult of Artemis on the side of Paul and his co-workers.

While the speech of Gallio (Ac 18,14–15) indicated that the Roman authorities refused to judge cases concerning Jewish religious disputes, the speech of the town clerk shows that the authorities in Hellenistic towns did not allow any illegal action against Paul, although the accusations made against Paul may have led to an official investigation.⁸⁸ The function of the speech is to show that the juridical system of the Hellenistic cities in some ways protected also Paul and his co-workers from the spontaneous anger and lynch mobs acting under strong influence of agitators.⁸⁹

4 The Speeches in the Narrative Concerning the Jerusalem Council

The narrative concerning the so-called Jerusalem council (Ac 15,1–35) is placed between the narratives concerning the first and second mission journeys (Ac 13,1–14,28, 15,36–18,23), and this is often taken as being the chronological sequence of these three events.⁹⁰ The narrative concerning the council contains three topical speeches, which not only form the major part of the unit, but also without them the narrative would be reduced to a third of the unit, limited to short and schematic information. The fact that the narrative is built on the speeches, and that the content of the speeches is better suited to a nar-

88 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 623.

89 Longenecker points out that real situation of Paul's mission in Ephesus was more dangerous than Luke presents it here, since Paul in Rom 16,4, 1 Cor 15,32, 2 Cor 1,8.10 suggest real threat of his life, ("Acts," 1015).

90 Scholars agree that the significance of Ac 15 lies in its theological and structural function within the entire structure of Acts. The theological importance concerns the creation of fundamental rules, which allowed the building of communities composed of Gentiles and Jews. The structural importance of Ac 15 concerns switching from a narrative related to the Palestinian Church (Judea and Samaria) into a narrative related strictly to Hellenistic world. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 269; I.H. Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 242.

rative concerning the mission in Judea and Samaria, indicates that placing of the speech may not be in chronological sequence. In other words, theological considerations take priority. The lack of coherence between the reason for the conflict in the church in Antioch (Ac 15,1 indicates soteriological problem) and the final solution written in the decree from Jerusalem community (Ac 15,28–29 indicates socio-religious bent), lends to the impression that the account is an artificial construct, although it indeed does have basis in historical events.⁹¹ The texts of the speeches, however, are clearly not transcriptions.

4.1 *The Speech of Peter to the Council (Ac 7–11)*⁹²

In the account concerning the Jerusalem council, Peter gives the first speech (Ac 15,7–11) to the apostles and the elders (v. 6). In the speech, Peter, speaking from his own experience (vv. 7–8), argues that faith makes Gentiles equal to the Jews in questions of purity (v. 9) and salvation (v. 11). Peter then addresses those who require circumcision of Gentiles, accusing them of forcing upon Gentiles something that was not even effective for the Jews, and acting against the will of God (v. 10). This accusation, shaped in the form of a rhetorical question, is followed by Peter's confession of salvation by the faith in Jesus, which is equally available to Jews and Gentiles (v. 11). The speech directly refers to the problem, which caused the council (Ac 15,1).⁹³ From the very beginning, Peter speaks in favour of Paul and Barnabas' position, by addressing himself as the one chosen by God to proclaim the Gospel to Gentiles, (Ac 10,1–11,18⁹⁴). The effect of his mission that began with his encounter with the Risen Christ is the gift of the Holy Spirit given by God to Gentiles in the same manner it was given to the Twelve, which attests the divine origin of the both events and God's will that Jews and Gentiles come to faith. Verse 12 suggests that there was no further discussion concerning the problem, and the speech becomes an authoritative pronouncement concerning the issue.⁹⁵ From here on the problem of salvation does not emerge directly as the main topic of the James' speech or the

91 The account in Ac 15 contains the decree (Ac 15,23–29) that is missing in Gal 2,1–10, which suggests that Luke used the Jerusalem source and the Antioch source. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2200–2206.

92 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 3.2.A.

93 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 621–622.

94 In this context, notable is the sequence of Luke's narrative concerning the beginning of the Church in Antioch (Ac 11,19–30), which comes after the narrative concerning conversion of Cornelius' household (Ac 10,1–11,18). Luke's narration suggests that the first initiative concerning mission to Gentiles came from Peter and the Jerusalem community under direct order of God. Longenecker, "Acts," 945.

95 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 636–637.

decree. Peter's speech clarifies that salvation depends on faith, and not on the works of the Law. Circumcision, as something unnecessary for Gentiles, is included in the general expression "burden", which refers directly to the Law that must be obeyed by those, who are circumcised. The speech has an introductory character, presenting faith as the basic means of salvation for both Jews and Gentiles. Jewish Christians must accept as a fundamental truth (Peter uses the plural τῆς χάριτος—*we believe*) that God chooses Gentiles as His people based on their faith, which is the cornerstone for a new relationship between Jews and Gentiles within the same community.

4.2 *The Speech of James (Ac 15,13–21)*⁹⁶

James gives the second speech in the group of topical speeches concerning the Jerusalem council (Ac 15,13–21) to the apostles and the elders, since the speech is given at the same session as the speech of Peter and the report of Paul and Barnabas (Ac 15,7–12). Although, the speech makes no direct reference to the problem that had seen the council called (Ac 15,1), however indirectly it refers to Luke's narrative concerning the opinion of some Christian Jews (Ac 15,5), and directly to Peter's speech, which is here used as the basis for argumentation in favour of Paul's and Barnabas position.⁹⁷ Using arguments from the Old Testament (Amos 9,11–12), James confirms Peter's statement that God Himself chose some Gentiles to be His people, the basis on their faith in Jesus. The focus of the speech, however, is on the Law, which should not be obligatory for Gentile Christians in the same way as it is required of Jewish Christians. Gentile Christians should obey only these elements of the Law, which are necessary to make association possible between the two groups (Ac 15,19–20).⁹⁸ For James it has been confirmed by God that Gentiles are counted among God's people (doctrinal level), however on the level of socio-religious relations between these two groups within the one Christian community some practical issues still have to be solved. Since Gentiles do not need to become Jews in order to become Christians, do they have any obligation to obey the Mosaic Law, along with Jews believing in Jesus? Although the Gentiles do not need to obey the Law in order to become Christians, they need to obey some part of the Jewish Law in order to make possible association with Jewish Christians. The same faith could not be enough to overcome differences in customs and culture, therefore what is required are compromises from both sides. The Jews must reduce to the most necessary points the requirements of the Law, which

96 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 3.2.B.

97 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 551.

98 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 456–457.

should be kept by Gentiles, and Gentile Christians have to abandon those customs and elements of their culture or beliefs that are contrary to the Jewish Law, in order to make possible their association.⁹⁹ The practical statement of James delimits the function of the speech, which takes on a progressive character, because on the one hand, it transfers the argument from the doctrinal level (Peter's speech) to the socio-religious level, and on the other hand, it prepares the necessary background for the conclusive speech, the decree itself (Ac 15,23–29).¹⁰⁰

4.3 *The Decree of the Jerusalem Council (Ac 15,23–29)*¹⁰¹

The third speech in the group of topical speeches concerning the Jerusalem council takes the form of a letter sent by the apostles and the elders to the Christians communities in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia, so giving the decree a local and particular character.¹⁰² This letter takes on a conclusive character within the group of topical speeches concerning the Jerusalem council, and it presents the final decision of the Council referring to the problem of circumcision. For this reason, the decree takes on the function of an obligatory rule to which the addressees must subordinate themselves (Ac 15,28–29). The letter starts with an indication of the addressees, the communities belonging to the united province of Syria (regions of Syria and Cilicia) with its capital Antioch (Ac 15,23). The communities in these regions were troubled by the Judaizers from Jerusalem Church (the Pharisees, who required circumcision for Gentile Christians), who acted without any authorisation from the leaders of the Jerusalem community, as is clearly indicated in the letter (Ac 15,24).¹⁰³ This statement makes the action of the Judaizers illegal and any claims made by them powerless. Contrary to their case, the Twelve and the elders send official delegates (Sylas and Juda) who will testify verbally the origin of the decree (Ac 15,25–27), necessary if decree favourable to Gentile Christians finds acceptance among the conservative fraction in the Antioch community.¹⁰⁴ As the last part of the letter comes the decree, which first, in a negative way, refers to the circumstances and consequently to the obligation to obey the Law that is

99 Verse 20 provides one of the three versions of the decree (Ac 15,20, 15,29, 21,25). Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 266–267.

100 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 553–554.

101 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 3.2.C.

102 The local restriction is missing in versions of the decree presented in Ac 15,20 and Ac 21,25. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 437.

103 Longenecker, "Acts," 942–943.

104 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 2290–2291.

not required from Gentile Christians (Ac 15,28). Secondly, the decree refers to the decision of the Council concerning some specific parts of the Law, which in practice must be respected by Gentile Christians as a decision made not only by authorities but also as a decision from God (Ac 15,28).¹⁰⁵ These obligations are identical to those presented in James' speech (Ac 15,20), although their order is changed. The letter in general and the decree in particular make almost no reference to the doctrinal material presented in the speech of Peter (Ac 15,28), giving the decree a pragmatic rather than doctrinal character. This points to the function of the letter, which is to solve the particular problem in order to calm the situation in the local communities. However, the letter and the decree addressed to particular local communities are placed in a Lukan narrative between the first and the second mission journey, thus giving the decree a more general and universal character. The place given to the letter in Luke's narrative structure transfers the solution of the particular problem into a general statement concerning the relationship between Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians.¹⁰⁶ The council was caused because of a doctrinal problem, which at least was the topic of Peter's speech, who gave a direct and clear answer to it (Ac 15,10–11). Peter's statement concerning salvation by faith and absence of a need for Gentile Christians to be circumcised and to obey the Law hardly survives in the speech of James (Ac 15,19) or in the decree (Ac 15,28). In these two speeches, the focus was on practical matters concerning the conditions that would enable the association between the two different groups within the one community. For this reason, the function of the decree is to show rather the conditions necessary to make possible association between the two groups within the Christian community, rather than present a doctrinal basis for the association.

5 The Speeches in the Narrative Concerning Paul's Imprisonment

The account concerning Paul's imprisonment contains long elaborate narratives where places, persons, and events change frequently, what gives the whole unit a highly dynamic character. Using geography and persons as keys, the narrative can be divided into five units. First the events in Jerusalem (Ac 21,17–23,32), second the events in Caesarea where Felix was procurator (Ac 23,33–24,27), and the third unit events in Caesarea where the procurator was Festus (Ac 25,1–26,32). The fourth unit refers to Paul's voyage to Rome

105 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 469.

106 Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 280.

(Ac 17,1–28,14) and the last unit concerns the beginning of Paul's stay in Rome (Ac 28,15–31). Each unit contains a group of three topical speeches, however two units (Ac 21,17–23,32, 25,1–26,32) additionally contain structural speeches. The narrative concerning the imprisonment in Jerusalem and in Caesarea refers to the same issue, i.e. Paul's innocence, from his arrival in Jerusalem, through his imprisonment and several trials with his apologetic speeches, until the beginning of his journey to Rome. The narratives of Paul's voyage to Rome and the beginning of his stay in Rome reveal his attitude as a man and apostle during a time of distress.

5.1 *In Jerusalem (Ac 21, 17–23, 32)*

5.1.1 The Structural Speech

5.1.1.1 *The Speech of James and the Elders to Paul (Ac 21,20–25)*¹⁰⁷

The narrative concerning Paul's imprisonment in Jerusalem begins with the structural speech of James and the elders of Jerusalem church to Paul (Ac 21,20b–25). Although the speech contains an important message concerning the different attitudes of the members of the Jerusalem Community towards Paul, the topic of the speech is not developed in the other parts of the unit. The main topic of the speech is Paul's presence in Jerusalem, which due to a controversial evaluation of his mission activities among the Diaspora Jews by Jewish Christians in Jerusalem (v. 21) could possibly become a source of problems within the community (v. 22).¹⁰⁸ Since the controversy concerns Paul's teaching about the Mosaic Law, the solution proposed by the Jerusalem leadership obligates Paul to take part in the purification ritual required by the Law, in order to manifest to Jewish Christians his respect for the Law.¹⁰⁹ This solution proved acceptable since Luke's narrative does not contain any suggestions that Jewish Christians in Jerusalem take any further action against Paul or that they were involved in incidents leading to his imprisonment.¹¹⁰ In this way, Luke leads the reader to acknowledge that, on the one hand, the Christian community in Jerusalem did everything to protect Paul from potential problems within Jewish Christian community. On the other hand, Luke indirectly indicates that Paul's opponents within the community did not take action against him, since he had showed his obedience to the Mosaic Law (Ac 21,26). After this necessary

107 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 3, section 9.

108 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 692.

109 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 876–877.

110 According to Luke's account, the solution was accepted by the group of Jerusalem believers, however indirectly this solution led to a situation where the same accusation was made by the Diaspora Jews against Paul (Ac 21,27–29).

preparation, Luke turns to the account of Paul's imprisonment, in which the believers from Jerusalem did not take a part (Ac 21,27–31). Because of that the main function of the speech is to clarify the relations between the three main actors of the narration during Paul's stay in Jerusalem (Paul, Jewish Christian community, and Jews from Jerusalem and from Diaspora), before the account of Paul's imprisonment will begin. The events that led to Paul's imprisonment did not have any links with Jewish Christian community in Jerusalem, either in a direct way to Jews from Jerusalem, because Luke mentions only Jews from Asia (v. 27), most probably from Ephesus (as verse 29 suggests), as the initiators of action against Paul.¹¹¹

5.1.2 The Sixth Group of Topical Speeches

5.1.2.1 *The Speech of Paul to the Crowd Outside the Temple (Ac 22,1–21)*¹¹²

This speech belongs to the group of topical speeches, concerning the initial investigation of Paul's case (and its result) in Jerusalem within a strictly Jewish context. This is the first topical speech given by Paul to the crowd gathered in the Jerusalem Temple, where the crowd, who considered Paul as an enemy of the Jews, the Law and the Temple (Ac 21,28), seized him. The setting of the speech is not accidental. At the end of his mission activities (at least those recorded by Luke), Paul finally is preaching to Jews in the Jerusalem Temple, which can be seen as Paul's fulfilment of Jesus' order (Ac 1,8), however late, compared to the Twelve.¹¹³ Paul's speech contains his apology given to faithful Jews gathered in the Temple (in particular) and all Jews (in general), which exclusively focuses on biographical information presented in a way that leads to the final, and obvious conclusion that Paul is a faithful servant of God.¹¹⁴ First, in a rather schematic manner Paul presents his Jewish background, since his birth until the event at Damascus (Ac 22,3–6), where his faithfulness to Judaism (persecution of the unorthodox sect) and service to God are strongly emphasised. Next, he presents the event at Damascus as his private Rubicon, where a revelatory encounter with Jesus forced him to acknowledge his wrong thinking and wrongdoing, and in the end it led him to change sides and become one with those, whom he had persecuted (Ac 22,6–16). The Lukan Paul's account strongly indicates a divine plan and divine intervention as the reason for Paul's

¹¹¹ Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 183.

¹¹² The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 3.3.1.A.

¹¹³ Paul's proclaiming of the kerygma in Judea and Samaria is mentioned indirectly by Luke in Ac 26,20. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 467–468.

¹¹⁴ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 703–704.

action (Ac 22,10.14).¹¹⁵ The point, which Paul notes from the beginning of the speech, Jesus' revelation to him in the Temple (Ac 22,17–21), is above all that which drew the wrath of the crowd (Ac 22,22–23). The reaction of the crowd is based on the very controversial claims made by Paul. He said that Jesus and not God was speaking to him in the Temple, and the message centres on Paul's appointment to be the apostle of Gentiles and not the Jews, because of the negative attitude of Jews towards Paul and his kerygma (Ac 22,17–21).¹¹⁶ Paul says that it was the will of Jesus that he should proclaim the kerygma to Gentiles (according to the God's plan), and practically it was realised by Jewish rejection of his kerygma (reality of Paul's mission). The point to which Luke wants to lead the reader is a recognition that the reason for Paul's rejection by his fellow citizen was his mission to Gentiles.

5.1.2.2 *The Speech of Paul before the Sanhedrin (Ac 23,1.6)*¹¹⁷

The second topical speech in the section consists of only two separated verses (Ac 23,1b.6b), however in both cases, Paul's intention was to give a speech but the circumstances did not allow it, and the speech was abruptly interrupted. By blending the interrupted speech with the dialogues and the narrative, Luke created a very suggestive picture of Paul's interrogation before the Sanhedrin, which had as a primary aim to determine the religious subject of the accusation against Paul (Ac 22,30). According to Luke's narrative, Paul at the very beginning of the interrogation became aware of the antagonistic attitude of the Sanhedrin (v. 2), which definitely was not of the same mind with him. It caused him to change his tactic from one of defence (v. 1) to one of division (v. 6).¹¹⁸ Then, he again starts the speech this time instead of presenting his understanding of how he was serving God, he invokes his Pharisaic pedigree and the main point of the accusation brought against him, which concerns the hope of resurrection. In fact, this "reason" for Paul's trouble has little, almost no attention in the preceding account (Ac 21,27–22,29). It is the very first time that the topic of "resurrection of the body", which in the following narrative and speeches will become the main religious subject to which Paul will refer to as the reason for his custody (Ac 24,15.21, 25,18–19, 26,21–23), is here explicitly articulated. The use of this reason serves probably to produce a double effect:

¹¹⁵ Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 187.

¹¹⁶ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 394.

¹¹⁷ The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 3.3.1.B.

¹¹⁸ In Ac 23,1 Paul probably starts his answer to accusation presented by the Jews from Asia in Ac 21,28. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 926. If it is so, the acts of the High Priest could be seen as a refusal of this defence.

first, it introduces the most controversial element, for Gentiles and Jews, of Paul's teaching, and second it reveals the reason why the Sanhedrin did not come to any decision, due to division and controversy among them in respect of this subject. It gives the speech a progressive character. After presenting the mission to Gentiles as the reason for Paul's rejection by Jews in the first speech (Ac 22,1–21), now the religious controversy concerning the hope of resurrection is presented as the reason for disagreement within the Sanhedrin about Paul's teaching, which indirectly will lead to his trial. The fact that the Jewish authorities failed to clarify the religious accusation against Paul, left the Romans with a general statement that Paul, the Roman citizen, is accused of some crime against the Jewish Law (Ac 23,10).¹¹⁹ This problem together with the attempt at Paul's assassination determined content of Claudius' report.

5.1.2.3 *The Letter of Claudius Lysias (Ac 23,26–30)*¹²⁰

The third topical speech (Ac 23,26–30) in the section takes the form of the official letter sent as a report by Lysias to Felix, the procurator residing in Caesarea. After Lysias had uncovered the plot to assassinate Paul (Ac 23,16–22), he decided to send for safety reasons the prisoner to Caesarea (Ac 23,23–24). The circumstances force the tribune to send the prisoner without properly finishing the investigation, as is known to the reader (Ac 23,11), but it is not present in Lysias' report.¹²¹ In the report, Lysias gives a very short, schematic and precisely designed account concerning Paul's case and the results of his own investigation. After casual greetings, Lysias presents the case of Paul indicating that Jews seized Paul but Lysias' soldiers liberated him. In the first encounter he learns that Paul is a Roman citizen, however in order to determine his crime Lysias asked for the help of the Sanhedrin. The result of his investigation shows that Paul did not commit any crime against the Roman law, and the reason for his seizure by Jews is a Jewish religious controversy about the Mosaic Law. The information about the assassination that had been planned, forced Lysias to protect the life of the Roman citizen and for this reason, he is sending the prisoner to Caesarea. By indicating that he has ordered Jews to follow due process in their accusations against Paul, Lysias directly points to Paul's trial before Felix. Naturally, the reader knows that the report hardly corresponds to the facts presented in the previous narration,¹²² however with Lysias' report,

119 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3281.

120 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 3.3.1.C.

121 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 3, 3331.

122 Peterson uses the differences in Luke's narrative and in Lysias' report as an argument for Luke's use of the sources (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 624).

Luke applies to him the first statement made by a Roman official involved in case of Paul, concerning his innocence of any crime against the Roman law (Ac 23,29). This statement will stay unchanged until the end of Luke's narrative in the Acts, what indirectly points to the fact that issues related to Jewish religion and the Law became an exclusive subject of a Roman judicial system investigation. Due to the socio-political context in which the Roman official must judge the case, they found themselves unwillingly drawn into the case of a Roman citizen accused of crimes strictly related to a Jewish religious controversy (Ac 24,5–6, 25,18–19.25, 26,2.6–8).¹²³ It shows that the main function of this conclusive speech/report in the section concerning Paul's imprisonment in Jerusalem is to indicate that the case of Paul concerns a strictly Jewish religious matter and in fact, it should not be an issue taken up by the Roman juridical system.¹²⁴

5.2 *In Caesarea (During the Time of Felix)*

The narrative concerning the Paul's trial before Felix (Ac 23,33–24,27) contains three topical speeches (Ac 24,2–8, 24,10–21, 24,22), giving details concerning the accusation, the defence and the sentence. These speeches are the major account concerning the first official trial of Paul and create a coherent narrative of the event. The fact that the account of Ac 24,1–27 covers a two-year period and it refers almost exclusively to the trial indicates Luke's intention to record the results of the trial before the Roman authorities, and to demonstrate that it was strictly a matter of internal Jewish religious controversy.

5.2.1 The Seventh Group of the Topical Speeches

5.2.1.1 *The Speech of Tertullus (Ac 24,2–8)*¹²⁵

The first speech (Ac 24,2b–8) is given by Tertullus, officially representing the authorities of the Jerusalem Temple (Ac 24,1–2). Half of the speech (vv. 2–4) is devoted to addressing Felix, whose favour would be the key to winning the case. In this way, Luke indicates that the Jews did not have any strong arguments against Paul, and they were forced to employ a professional master of rhetoric, who would ameliorate this disadvantage by his rhetorical skills

123 Fitzmyer points out that Lysias' report suggests Jewish responsibility for the incident in the Temple (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 703–704).

124 Scholars rightly points out that this paradoxical situation serves Lukan theology, indicating the way in which God fulfils His promise to Paul about his witness in Rome (Ac 23,11). Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 408.

125 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 3.3.2.A.

(note the extensive use of *captatio benevolentiae*).¹²⁶ In the second part of the speech, he presents the accusation concerning Paul in a general and schematic manner. First, Paul is accused of instigating disturbances among Jews throughout the whole Empire (v. 5), an attempt to show that the case has a political character. Paul's activities are presented here as a threat to the *Pax Romana*. Indirectly, Tertullus insinuates that the sect of the Nazarenes threatens the peace of the Empire.¹²⁷ Next, Paul is accused of attempting to desecrate the Jerusalem Temple (v. 6), on the surface a strictly religious issue, however the general character of the accusation suggests that the case could also be a crime against Roman law, since it was prohibited to desecrate temples.¹²⁸ Instead of presenting arguments upholding the accusations, Tertullus simply imputes his interpretation of Paul's case (v. 9), indicating that the accusers did not have any witnesses who could confirm their accusations.¹²⁹ Both accusations, although they concerned strictly Jewish matters, could be recognised as crimes against the Roman law, since disturbances in the cities and especially in Jerusalem, a city always ready to rise up, was not tolerated by local Roman authorities, and desecration of the Temple, was a serious crime punishable with the death penalty.¹³⁰ These two accusations indicate the function of Tertullus' speech, presenting the case of Paul as the crimes against Roman law.

5.2.1.2 *The Speech of Paul before Felix (Ac 24,10–21)*¹³¹

The second topical speech (Ac 24,10b–21) is given by Paul and it contains Paul's defence against the accusations raised by the Temple authorities and presented in Tertullus' speech (Ac 24,2–8). The speech starts with a short *captatio benevolentiae*, where Paul's trust in just judgment of Felix is directly presented by mentioning Felix's competency in matters concerning the Jews and their religion. In his defence, Paul first points out forcefully that the accusers are unable to prove the accusation that he instigated disturbances among the Jews throughout the whole Empire, since even Paul's rebellious action in Jerusalem cannot be proven (Ac 24,11–13).¹³² However, Paul fearlessly confessed his be-

¹²⁶ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 416.

¹²⁷ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 632.

¹²⁸ In the case of the Jerusalem Temple, the Jerusalem Temple authorities possessed the right to judge the case itself. Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3354.

¹²⁹ This practice was acceptable in system *extra ordinem*. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 702–703.

¹³⁰ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 731–732.

¹³¹ The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 3.3.2.B.

¹³² Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 199.

longing to the sect of the Nazarenes, not in order to expose his guilt (as the accusers would like to present it), but in order to give a true description of the way he is following. The description is limited to two most important points. The first one indicates that the group is one of many groups within Judaism and follows the tradition of the ancestors (Ac 24,14), and the second one concerns crucial elements of the group's doctrine, referring to faith in the resurrection of the dead (Ac 24,15).¹³³ This doctrine obliged Paul to lead a good and responsible life, which can be confirmed by his giving alms for the nation and his intention to offer sacrifices in the Temple.¹³⁴ The second reason for Paul's visit to Jerusalem excludes the possibility of his attempt to desecrate the Temple. To this accusation, Paul responds in three ways; first, he presents a relevant account of the incident in the Temple (Ac 24,18). Next, he questions the right of the Sanhedrin to bring the accusation, since the Jews from Asia were those who acted against Paul (Ac 24,19).¹³⁵ Finally, he notes that during his interrogation the Sanhedrin had not presented accusations against Paul that now were presented in Tertullus' speech (Ac 24,20). The only possible accusation, which Paul is ready to admit, concerns the strictly religious controversy about the resurrection of the dead (Ac 24,21). In this way, on the one hand Paul convincingly shows that Tertullus' accusations were not grounded in facts, and on the other hand, he skilfully moves his case into the area of Jewish religious controversy, which was not subject to Roman law (Ac 24,14–16.20–21).¹³⁶ This was the main function of this progressive speech, which prepared the necessary ground for presentation of the final decision of the judge pronounced in the following narrative.

5.2.1.3 *The Pronouncement of Felix (Ac 24,22)*¹³⁷

The third speech in the section is in fact only a single saying by Felix, which he utters as the final proclamation of the trial's result. After the speech of the accusers (Ac 24,2–8) and the defensive speech of Paul (Ac 24,10–21), it would be natural to expect the final speech of the judge containing his decision and its argumentation. However, Felix reached no final verdict concerning Paul's case, forcing Luke to replace the concluding speech with a short utterance indicating the reason for adjourning the trial. The reason offered is the necessity

¹³³ Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 958–959.

¹³⁴ Note that Paul does not refer to the accusation that he is the leader of the group.

¹³⁵ The absence of the accusers was sufficient reason for withdrawal of a charge. Longenecker, "Acts," 1063.

¹³⁶ Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, 446.

¹³⁷ The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 3.3.2.C.

to interrogate Lysias, the Roman tribune from Jerusalem, an eyewitness to the case. Due to the fact that Ac 24,5–8 contains the text's problem, it is unclear, if Felix really found it necessary to interrogate Lysias, because of the differences between Lysias' report and the Jews' accusation, or simply it is a Felix's excuse to avoid making a decision, not due to doubts concerning the case but rather because of his own private benefit. Luke's narrative supports the second possibility (Ac 24,22–23,26), since Luke indicates twice Felix's knowledge of Jews (Ac 24,10,22) as well as the source of his knowledge, his Jewish wife Drusilla (Ac 24,24),¹³⁸ excluding incompetence as a reason for postpone the verdict. Luke presents also the private financial interest of Felix as a reason for leaving the case unfinished for two years (Ac 24,26), a quite common weakness of Roman officials, mentioned not only in the Bible.¹³⁹ The fact that for two years Felix made no final decision concerning Paul's case, suggests that he neglected his official duties for some reason different from that related directly to the case.

The speech/utterance takes on a conclusive character in the group of speeches concerning the first official trial of Paul in Caesarea. After presenting in the first speech a statement that Paul is not guilty of any crime against Roman law, and after in the second speech indicating that Paul's case concerns a strictly religious issue, which cannot be recognised as a sufficient case for punishment, in the last speech an acquittal verdict would be expected.¹⁴⁰ Felix's incapability of making such an obvious verdict was the first but the most influential wrongdoing, injustice, which on the one hand will change Paul's life, but on the other hand will lead Paul to fulfilling the mandate of Jesus (Ac 23,11).¹⁴¹

5.3 *In Caesarea (During the Time of Festus)*

The second stage of Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea contains the account of his second trial before the new procurator of Judea, Festus (Ac 24,27–26,32). The account mostly consists of four speeches, where three of them create a group of topical speeches (Ac 25,8.10–11, 25,14–21, 26,2–23,24–27.29) and the one speech takes on a structural function (Ac 25,24–27). In fact, only the first topical speech (Ac 25,8.10–11) strictly concerns the trial, while the other two topical speeches concern consequences that have been raised after the first speech, namely the problem of finding sufficient reason for sending the prisoner to Caesar. Paul spent two years in Caesarea's prison without being either condemned or freed, making it an unfinished case, which can again be

¹³⁸ Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3422.

¹³⁹ Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 967.

¹⁴⁰ Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3421–3422.

¹⁴¹ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 739.

a subject of a trial when a suitable opportunity appears. After two years, the opportunity comes again, when a new and inexperienced procurator takes office, and Paul's opponents immediately use it (Ac 25,1–6).¹⁴² However, the trial brought a result unexpected by all sides, and it created radically new circumstances, which in the end worked against the procurator.

5.3.1 The Eighth Group of the Topical Speeches

5.3.1.1 *The Speech of Paul before Festus (Ac 25,8.10–11)*¹⁴³

Concerning the trial before Festus, the Luke's narrative mentions the speech of the prosecutors, which is not recorded but only shortly summarised as containing the serious accusations with any strong arguments (Ac 25,7). Most probably, the speech contained the accusations similar or identical to those presented by Luke in the speech of Tertullus (Ac 24,2–8). After the accusers' speech, Paul made his defence speech, which is reduced here to a short summary containing his answer to the three accusations that had been already defended in his speech before Felix (Ac 24,10–21).¹⁴⁴ In this way, Luke indicates that Paul's innocence has been sufficiently proven, and in this context, Festus' proposition is highly inappropriate, since the reason for it has nothing to do with the legal procedures that he should follow. Festus' proposition forced Paul to remind him that he was a Roman citizen, who had not committed any crime against Jewish Law, and every other possible accusation concerning Roman law should be judged by the Roman authorities. Festus in his proposition mentions that the trial would take place in Jerusalem but he will oversee it (Ac 25,9). That is something very suspicious if one considers the context of this proposal.¹⁴⁵ The Lukan Paul sees this proposal as an attempt to hand him over to the Jews, raising the possibility of Paul's assassination rather than possibility of the just trial before the Sanhedrin. In such circumstances, in order to save his life, Paul was forced to use his Roman citizen's rights and appeal to Caesar (Ac 25,11), indirectly showing his lack of trust in justice administered by a local Roman official.¹⁴⁶ Unconditional recognition of the Paul's request (Ac 25,12), indicates that the main function of Paul's speech before Festus is to present the circumstances and the reason for Paul's appeal to Caesar.

¹⁴² Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 423.

¹⁴³ The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 3.3.3.A.

¹⁴⁴ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 647.

¹⁴⁵ This kind of proposition in the context of a legal trial must give rise to some suspicions. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 990.

¹⁴⁶ Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 1068.

5.3.1.2 *The First Speech of Festus (Ac 25,14–21)*¹⁴⁷

The second topical speech (Ac 25,14b–21) Festus gives to Herod Agrippa II and Bernice, during their visit to the newly appointed procurator. The visit itself has no direct link with Paul's trial, and Festus' speech, which is private in character, seems to be nothing more than an address about a recent issue that the new procurator is facing. However, Luke uses the speech to present Festus' view-point on the case. Festus gives a chronological and coherent account concerning the case of Paul, which in general terms agrees with the account known to the readers based on the narrative given in Ac 24,1–25,12.¹⁴⁸ Naturally, the account contains information with the obvious purpose of present himself as the procurator, in the best possible light (Ac 25,20). The fact that, on the one hand, the speech ends with mention of Festus' decision to send Paul to Caesar (Ac 25,21) but without any indication of Festus' problem concerning a substantial report about the case for Caesar attests the self-concentrated purpose of his speech. On the other hand, the fact that it is not Festus' request but Agrippa's free decision to hear Paul shows that in this case a coincidence, rather than his own deliberative action, is working in favour of Festus.¹⁴⁹ For this reason, the function of the speech is to present the final state of affairs concerning Paul's case, which was reached by the Roman officials during his two years long imprisonment in Caesarea.

5.3.1.3 *The Speech of Paul before the King Herod Agrippa II (Ac 26,2–29)*¹⁵⁰

The third topical speech (Ac 26,2–29) is given by Paul to Herod Agrippa II in particular, although its background has a public character. This kind of setting serves Luke's narrative concept presented in Ac 9,15, which characterises Paul as the apostle who will proclaim the gospel to Gentiles (Ac 13–21), the kings and the Jewish nation (Ac 22,3–21). The speech is fulfilment of Paul's mission to the kings. At the beginning (vv. 2–3) Paul declares that he is going to give a defensive speech as an answer to the Jewish accusations, which are not mentioned at all in the narrative concerning Paul's interrogation before Agrippa.¹⁵¹ However, in fact, instead of an apologetic speech, he gives a strictly autobiographical account, presenting himself as a faithful Jew in service of God according to his conscience and his understanding of God's will (Ac 26,4–11).¹⁵² It

147 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 3.3.3.B.

148 Longenecker, "Acts," 1071.

149 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3480.

150 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 3.3.3.C.

151 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 659–660.

152 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 735.

has led to dramatic changes during his lifetime (Ac 26,12–18), which he humbly accepted in order to fulfil his service to God (Ac 26,18). This service led him to conflict with Jews in Jerusalem, to whom he proclaimed the suffering and resurrected Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth (Ac 26,19–23). This proclamation twice became for Paul a turning point in his life, first when he decided to persecute those who believe in the resurrected Messiah (Ac 26,8–9), and second when he himself became the subject of persecution because of his faith in the resurrected Messiah (Ac 26,22–23). This extensive biographical account, which can be compared to the similar account in Ac 22,3–21 and Luke's narration concerning Saul/Paul (Ac 9,1–30), at the end of the speech takes on a kerygmatic character when the theme of the resurrected Messiah became the topic of Paul's preaching to Agrippa (Ac 26,25–29).¹⁵³ It points to the function of the speech. In the speech to the crowd in the Jerusalem Temple (Ac 22,3–21), Paul's autobiographical account served to prove that he is a faithful Jew obeying the will of God. In the speech before the king, his autobiographic account serves to present Paul as a true and faithful Jew, who believes in the Messiah raised by God (Ac 26,6–8, 22–23). However, at the same time, the speech in the Temple shows also that Paul fulfilled his task to proclaim gospel to the Jewish nation, and the speech to the king proved that he also fulfilled his task to proclaim the gospel to the kings, according to Jesus' mandate (Ac 9,15).

5.3.2 The Structural Speech

5.3.2.1 *The Second Speech of Festus (Ac 25,24–27)*¹⁵⁴

According to Luke's narrative, the next day, after Agrippa request, Festus arranged a meeting of the political and the military notables of Caesarea, who are present during Paul's interrogation before Agrippa 11.¹⁵⁵ Before it takes place, Festus gives a short introductory speech (Ac 25,24–27). First he offers a schematic presentation of the affair concerning Paul, which corresponds to Ac 25,14–21 and the whole narrative of Ac 24,1–25,12 but only in general terms. Generalisations and modifications contained in the speech are obvious to the reader. Then Festus presents the reason for the interrogation of Paul, which has been organised in order to find sufficient reason for Paul's being sent to Caesar (Ac 25,26–27). This part of the speech contains new information, showing that Festus used Agrippa's interests in Paul's case to solve his private problem relating to lack of a legal reason for the solution he has chosen.¹⁵⁶ The rather

¹⁵³ Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3490.

¹⁵⁴ The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 3, section 10.

¹⁵⁵ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 427.

¹⁵⁶ Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 1001.

unexpected request of Paul, created some problems for the inexperienced procurator, who on the one hand has to send to Rome a prisoner that had not been found guilty of any crime against Rome, and on the other hand, Festus fails to earn the favour of the Jerusalem Temple authorities. In this context, Agrippa's interest in Paul's case became for Festus an excellent opportunity to avoid the consequences of these double failures.¹⁵⁷ Although, only Agrippa asked for the interrogation of Paul, Festus invited all notables of Caesarea, giving the event a public character. The event includes the king of Jews, who on the one hand was well known in Rome (which admired his service for the Empire), and on the other hand he possessed rights to dispose the High Priest of the Temple. For these reasons, Agrippa's presence and his opinion were of crucial importance for Festus' future. This intention of Festus indicates the preparatory function of this structural speech, and allows the following speech of Paul before the king Agrippa (Ac 26,2–23.25–27) to take on a different aim rather than be apologetic or defensive.

6 The Voyage to Rome

The narrative concerning Paul's voyage to Rome (Ac 27,1–28,14), probably due to the fact that Luke was Paul's companion during the voyage, is not only long and detailed, but also skilfully elaborated. While many episodes are recounted, the narrative contains hardly any speeches. Although there is the triple structure of three topical speeches (Ac 27,10, 27,21–26, 27,33–34), apart from the second speech (Ac 27,21–26) they are reduced to single utterance. The topic of the speeches does not concern theological themes or legal matters but it presents Paul as a man of encouragement in time of distress.

6.1 *The Ninth Group of the Topical Speeches*

6.1.1 The First Speech of Paul to the Voyagers (Ac 27,10)¹⁵⁸

The first speech (Ac 27,10) takes the form of Paul's conviction concerning the danger of sea travel during the autumn.¹⁵⁹ The mention of the fast before the start of the voyage (Ac 27,9), and the three elements of danger (cargo, ship, lives) during the voyage (Ac 27,10), which corresponds to the chronological presentation of the events in the following narrative (Ac 27,13–44), may suggest prophetic nature (theological approach) or expository character (literary

157 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 734.

158 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 3.3.4.

159 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 775.

approach) of the utterances.¹⁶⁰ Paul's words were ignored by the ship-owner, the pilot, and the centurion, so the voyage was continued.¹⁶¹ Luke presents Paul as the only man conscious of dangers of the voyage, so emphasizing the function of the speech in Luke's narrative concerning the voyage, rather than reflecting the incompetence of the ship-owner. The main function of the speech is to introduce the main topic of the three speeches in the section concerning Paul's voyage to Rome, which is to show Paul's concern for saving the lives of his co-voyagers.

6.1.2 The Second Speech of Paul to the Voyagers (Ac 27,21–26)¹⁶²

The second topical speech (Ac 27,21–26) Paul gives to the co-voyagers who lost their hope for surviving during the long storm. In fact, it is the most developed speech in the section, which offers a direct reason for such extensive narration of Paul's voyage to Rome. In the circumstances that all voyagers stopped eating and sank into depression, the small words of comfort become a source of hope and power.¹⁶³ In his speech, first he reminds them that their present troubles are a consequence of their ignoring his advice, a rhetorical strategy to gain more of their attention to his words (Ac 27,21). Next, he presents his good news to the voyagers assuring them that they will survive this disaster and the only loss that they will suffer will be the loss of the ship. His conviction is based on a revelation received from God's angel that, in order to save Paul, God will save all the voyagers (Ac 27,23–24). The Lukan Paul strongly believes in the angel's words, which were for him words of hope and truth, however Luke writes nothing about the response of Paul's co-voyagers to his speech. It indicates the double function of this speech, which on the one hand presents Paul as actively involved in a struggle for sustaining co-voyagers hope, what gives the speech a progressive character in the section of the topical speeches.¹⁶⁴ On other hand, however, Luke in this speech again indicates to the reader that Paul is constantly under the protection of God in order to fulfil Jesus' will (Ac 23,11).¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3598.

¹⁶¹ Many scholars interpret Paul's advice as realistic based on common sense and general knowledge about sailing. Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 1038. However, it would raise questions of responsibility and professionalism on the part of the owner of the ship and the sailors. In Luke's narrative, verse 11 strongly suggests that there were some reasons, for which the men in charge recognised the forward sailing as safe (Ac 27,11).

¹⁶² The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 3.3.4.

¹⁶³ Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 767.

¹⁶⁴ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 458.

¹⁶⁵ Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 1042–43.

6.1.3 The Third Speech of Paul to the Voyagers (Ac 27,33–34)¹⁶⁶

The third topical speech (Ac 27,33b–34), Paul gives to the same people and in similar circumstances as the second speech. The context (Ac 27,27–32) shows that after Paul's second speech (Ac 27,21–26) the voyagers took some actions. However, the voyagers' general attitude of despair was still dominant, forcing Paul to repeat his words of encouragement and promise for salvation. The same message was given in the second speech, however this time the source and reason for Paul's hope is omitted. Consider the following context of this speech, where the voyagers must swim to the island (Ac 27,39–44), this time Paul's encouragement takes form of practical advice, which help people focus regaining their strength by eating.¹⁶⁷ However, the mention of "perfect safety" (Ac 27,34b) in context of Ac 27,42–43,¹⁶⁸ where the soldiers plan to kill all the prisoners is recorded, shows another function of this short speech, which is to reveal Paul as the agent by whom God saves Paul's co-voyagers including also the prisoners. Because of, Paul God saves the voyagers and because of Paul, the centurion spares lives of the prisoners.

7 In Rome

The very short and schematic narration of Paul's stay in Rome (Ac 28,17–31) is almost exclusively limited to three topical speeches (Ac 28,17–20, 28,21–22, 28,25–27) with hardly any elaborate narrative section (Ac 28,17a.23–25a). It indicates that Luke's concern is to focus on the relationship between Paul and Jews from Rome, rather than on a detailed account of the two years long Paul's imprisonment. This approach to the narrative concerning Paul in Rome, which at the same time ends the Acts of the Apostles, raises many question concerning the reason and purpose for the enigmatic ending of Luke's history.

¹⁶⁶ The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 3.3.4.

¹⁶⁷ Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 692–693.

¹⁶⁸ Keener sees here possible hyperbolic allusion to Jesus' promise concerning persecution (Lk 21,18). Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3644–3645. Truly interesting is the aspect of the relation between Paul and the centurion, skilfully created by Luke in his narration, which begins with lack of trust (Ac 27,11) but it ends with the saving of Paul's life (Ac 27,43).

7.1 *The Tenth Group of the Topical Speeches*

7.1.1 The Speech of Paul to the Elders of the Jewish Community in Rome (Ac 28,17–20)¹⁶⁹

The history concerning the beginning of Paul's stay in Rome (Ac 28,14–31) is short and consists almost entirely of the three topical speeches (Ac 28,17–20, 28,21–22, 28,25–28). The topic of the speeches concerns the relationship between Paul and the (non-Christian) Jews living in Rome. According to Luke's narrative, three days after his arrival in Rome, Paul called together the elders of the Jewish communities in order to make his apologetic speech. This first topical speech presents Paul explaining the absence of any crime against the nation and the Law (Ac 28,17) as well as the lack of evil intent in his appeal to Caesar (Ac 28,19). Paul at the beginning of his speech (Ac 28,17–19) concentrates on relations between him and Jews in Jerusalem, which are characterised by severe Jewish hostility against Paul (Ac 28,17b.19). Compared to Luke's narrative (Ac 21,27–26,32), Paul's speech contains some generalisations and highly schematic presentations of the events, which put in a bad light Jews and takes away any responsibility from Roman officials.¹⁷⁰ This kind of presentation of the facts leads to the main point of Paul's defence, concerning the reason for his appeal to Caesar. He has done it in order to save his own life, and not in order to accuse the Jewish nation.¹⁷¹ After finishing his apology, Paul precedes with a statement indicating that he shares the same hope about the Messiah as all Jews, and for this reason, he is imprisoned.¹⁷² Similar to his apology, here Paul uses an undefined, schematic, and generalised way of presentation his politico-religious views. Although the relations between Paul and Jews in Jerusalem did not become the subject of any controversy between Paul and the elders of Jewish Community in Rome, however the second topic concerning the hope of Israel earned much attention from the elders and it becomes the topic that will be developed in the next two speeches.

7.1.2 The Speech of the Jewish Elders to Paul (Ac 28,21–22)¹⁷³

The second topical speech (Ac 28,21–22) is given by the elders of the Jewish community in Rome as their answer to Paul's apologetic speech. The elders know nothing about Paul's case, because they have been not informed by the

169 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 3.3.5.A.

170 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 793.

171 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 1068–1069.

172 Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 257.

173 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 3.3.5.B.

brethren from Jerusalem about the accusations against him. Considering the facts that, first, the authorities did not send any letter containing an explanation of Paul's case or instructions about desirable actions towards Paul from the side of the Roman Jews, and second they have not sent any messenger-accuser to the Jews in Rome, we may conclude that the Palestinian Jews finally left Paul's case to the Romans.¹⁷⁴ It suggests that any prejudice based on the generally bad reputation of Paul, being held among Jews living in Diaspora, is not involved here. However, Paul's direct blaming of Palestinian Jews for his present state in contrast with the Roman Jews' statement that Palestinian Jews have not sent any accusations about him to them may indicate some kind of sub-text or suspicion concerning Paul's apology. Luke's account gives the impression that the Roman Jews had not had any encounters with Christian Jews in Rome, however they knew about the controversy concerning "the way" to which Paul belonged.¹⁷⁵ They did not ask for a presentation of "the way's" doctrine, they asked Paul to answer to the fact that this way is spoken of negatively by the entire world. This request shows two aspects of the Roman Jews' attitude towards Paul.¹⁷⁶ The first concerns their prejudice towards the followers of Jesus the Messiah, attested by the second speech of Paul (Ac 28,25–28). The second aspect concerns the transformation in Luke's narrative of a private case regarding Paul into a general case of the Judeo-Christian church. Jews in Rome want to know about the sect Paul belongs to and not particularly about his case. In this way at the end of his narration, Luke makes Paul the representative of the Christian Church, who explains/proclaims the kerygma about the kingdom of God and Jesus to Jews in Rome.¹⁷⁷ This indicates the function of this progressive speech in the set of three topical speeches of the section, which is to present one particular suspicion concerning the sect that Paul belongs to as the basic reason for addressing his kerygma to Jews in Rome.

7.1.3 The Speech of Paul to the Jews in Rome (Ac 28,25–28)¹⁷⁸

The third topical speech (Ac 28,25–28) is given by Paul to Jews dwelling in Rome. Although the reason for the speech was the Jews' request to Paul for an apology of the sect he belongs to, surprisingly the speech does not refer to this theme at all. Contrary, there is narrative in the section (Ac 28,23–25), which

174 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 799.

175 Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 227. Concerning proposals to solve the problem, see Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3747.

176 Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 794.

177 Keener, *Acts*, vol. 4, 3747.

178 The analysis of the speech is given in Chapter 2, section 3.3.5.C.

describes Paul's activities among Jews. It mentions that Paul was proclaiming the kingdom of God, constantly convincing Jews that Jesus is the Messiah. The result of Paul's proclamation was partially successful and partly a failure, because some of them were convinced by Paul's arguments and some of them were not, which in the end led to controversy between them that ends without any conclusion but instead it ends with their leaving the meeting. This is the direct context of Paul's second speech, which contains Paul's final statement concerning his mission activities among Jews in Rome. This statement is presented in the last verse of the speech (v. 28), and it is preceded by two preparatory sections. The first one (v. 25b) presents the Holy Spirit as the agent judging the Jews (in general) by the words of prophet Isaiah. The second one describes the constant stubbornness of Jews in not listening to the words of the prophets (vv. 26–27).¹⁷⁹ The *anti-typos* of this quotation is obvious, Paul is a prophet sent by God to proclaim the kerygma about Jesus the Messiah to Jews in Rome, so that they will be able to “*understand with their heart and return, and I should heal them*”.¹⁸⁰ Because, Jews in Rome did not accept the way he belongs to, and did not believe in Jesus the Messiah proclaimed by Paul, as in many cases before, also in this case the mission primarily addressed to Jews could not be continued due to their stubbornness and lack of a willingness to seek the truth. As a consequence of their attitude, Paul declares that his mission will turn to Gentiles, which can be taken as the general characteristic of his mission in Rome during his imprisonment (v. 28). This speech is the last one in the section concerning Paul's stay in Rome, giving it according to Luke's narrative structure a conclusive character. The mention that Gentiles will accept salvation in the name of Jesus, is the last statement of Paul in Acts, and with it, Luke's narrative concept takes on probably more than one particular meaning.¹⁸¹ Naturally, it refers to Paul's mission among Jews in Rome, but at the same time it presents the general characteristic of Paul's mission to Jews during his whole mission years, as well as it indirectly indicates that Paul is the apostle of Gentiles.¹⁸²

179 Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 715.

180 Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 802; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 715–716.

181 Johnson points out that it is the third statement concerning the mission to Gentiles after Ac 13,46–47 and Ac 18,6 (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 458).

182 Schnabel, *Exegetical Commentary*, 1072.

Conclusion

Luke used three major devices (narratives, speeches and dialogues) for writing the Acts of the Apostles. Each of these devices has a different function in the composition of Acts, but it is their interconnection that produces this literary masterpiece. The focus of the present study is the speeches of Acts, and consequently attention is given mainly to the function of these speeches, with little attention is given to the two other devices. In chapter 1 we presented the text of Acts without the speeches. The main reason for this presentation is to show that the text of the Acts of the Apostles even without the speeches is coherent and readable. It leads us to the conclusion that the narratives and dialogues are sufficient to give the reader sufficient historical and chronological records concerning the beginning of the movement called Christian. In a negative sense, the speeches are not necessary in principle for Acts in matters concerning the history and chronology of the first generation of the Christians. In a positive sense, the function of the speeches differs from being a historical account, and this shows that they have some specific function for which Luke used them in the structure of Acts.

Green, in his study of Luke's historiography, rightly points to the fact that the purpose of Luke-Acts is hermeneutical, i.e. that Luke's interest lies in the meaning of the events rather than in recounting the mere facts.¹ This means that Luke does not only present the facts, but also offers an interpretation of them. What kind of device did Luke use to present his hermeneutic? Reading Chapter 1 of this book, we can learn much about the history and chronology of the time, but little about the author's interpretation of the facts presented, and even less about the author's thought and theology.

The speeches are the device used by Luke to present his interpretation of the events, which mostly concerns their theological and sociological meaning. This points to the main function of the speeches, which is hermeneutic. The speeches in Acts take many different forms: typical Jewish or Greek speeches, single utterances, prayers, letters, and even a decree. They also differ in length, in their purpose, and in their relation to the narrative and the dialogues. Although the variety of the speeches creates a real challenge for those who wish to systematise them into category groups, we have divided them into two major groups: the topic (or thematic) speeches and the structural speeches.

1 J.B. Green, "Internal Repetition in Luke-Acts: Contemporary Narratology and Lukan Historiography," in *History, Literature, and Society in the Book of Acts*, ed. B. Witherington III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 283–299.

The main rule for categorizing the speeches is the presence of a topic that is continued and developed in the following speeches.² The speeches that contain such a topic create the group of topical speeches.³ The speeches that do not fit into this pattern belong to the group of structural speeches, each with specific functions: preparation for the following narrative (Ac 4,23–30, 6,2–4); explanation of the circumstances (Ac 19,25–28,35–40); presentation of the general structure of the whole book (Ac 1,4–8).⁴ Among the total of forty speeches in Acts, we categorised thirty of them as belonging to the group of topical speeches, which were the subject for analysis in Chapter 2. The remaining ten speeches of Acts are categorised as structural speeches, which were analysed in Chapter 3.

The topical speeches are divided into ten groups (with three speeches in each group) using either geography or a person as a key to establishing the group.

The first two groups concern the mission in Jerusalem. The topic of the three speeches in the first group (Ac 2,14–40, 3,12–26, 4,8–12,19–20) concerns the kerygma proclaimed by the Twelve, and its reception by the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The main concern of the speeches is to present Jesus as the Messiah. In general, this message is accepted by many people in Jerusalem, but it is rejected by the Sanhedrin. This is one of the crucial points in Luke's theology: the Sanhedrin, representing the nation, did not recognise their Messiah. The topic of the three speeches in the second group (Ac 5,29–32, 5,35–39, 7,2–60) concerns the conflict between the Twelve and the Sanhedrin that was caused by the kerygma proclaimed by the apostles, and in the end led to persecution of Jesus' believers in Jerusalem. The Sanhedrin prohibited the Twelve from proclaiming Jesus as the Messiah, but it was ignored by them because of their conviction that they must fulfil the order of the Lord (Ac 1,8). The main

2 In the majority of cases the speeches from the topic group are found consecutively as part of the same narrative section, however there are cases where the topical speeches are not consecutive, and belong to different narrative sections, which however concern the same issue (e.g. the topical speeches concerning the three mission journeys of Paul; the topical speeches in the narrative concerning the mission in Judea and Samaria).

3 There are the topical speeches: the first group—Ac 2,4–40, 3,12–26, 4,8–12,19–20; the second group—Ac 5,29–32, 5,35–39, 7,2–60; the third group—Ac 8,20–23, 10,28–29,34–43,47, 11,5–17; the fourth group—Ac 13,16–41,46–47, 17,22–31, 20,18–35; the fifth group—Ac 15,7–11, 15,13–21, 15,23–29; the sixth group—Ac 22,1–21, 23,1,6, 23,26–30; the seventh group—Ac 24,2–8, 24,10–21, 24,22; the eighth group—Ac 25,8,10–11, 25,14–21, 26,2–29; the ninth group—Ac 27,10, 27,21–26, 27,33–34; the tenth group—Ac 28,17–20, 28,21–22, 28,25–28.

4 There are the structural speeches: Ac 1,4–8, 1,16–22, 4,24–30, 6,2–4, 14,15–17, 18,14–15, 19,25–27, 19,35–40, 21,20–25, 25,24–27.

concern of Luke is of a theological nature, and it refers to the Twelve as being the true servants of God in contrast to the official leaders of Judaism. This has social repercussions in the persecution, which on the one hand signals the long and slow process of the alienation of the Christian group from mainstream of Jewish religion, but on the other hand it serves as the beginning of missionary activity. This last factor is the most important for Luke's narrative of Acts.

The third group (Ac 8,20–23, 10,28–29.34–43.47, 11,5–17) concerns the mission in Judea and Samaria, where the topic of the three speeches is the gift of Holy Spirit. The gift is freely given by God to those, who have the faith, and it cannot be obtained by human effort or some kind of trade. The gift of the Holy Spirit is here presented as the main argument for accepting the Gentiles, and the Holy Spirit is the main agent leading the believers in Jesus to overcome the division caused by customs and prejudices. The gift of Holy Spirit coming down on the Gentiles, who had not yet been baptised, forced the apostles and elders to recognise the event as God's acceptance of the Gentiles as part of the New Israel. Luke's main theological point concerns God, who is constantly forcing the believers to explore unknown paths. For this purpose He uses the Holy Spirit as a freely acting agent who directs the steps of the emerging Church.

The fourth group of speeches (Ac 13,16–41.46–47, 17,22–31, 20,18–35) concerns the three mission journeys of Paul. The topic of the speeches is Paul's kerygma proclaimed to Jews (the first mission journey), Gentiles (the second mission journey) and the elders of the Christian community (the third mission journey). The first two speeches contain the most problematic part of the kerygma, which became the main reason for the rejection of Paul's kerygma. The last speech indicates Paul's achievement as missionary, who despite difficulties in proclaiming the kerygma to Jews and Gentiles in the end left the Christian community capable of taking on the responsibility for the deposit of the faith. In this speech Paul concentrates on showing the way in which the elders should fulfil their duty and enforce their authority. The main concern of Luke in this group of speeches is of a sociological nature. Paul is seen as the successful missionary who succeeded in establishing the Christian Church consisting of two previously antagonistic groups (Jews versus Gentiles), who now together create the New Israel.

The fifth group of topical speeches (Ac 15,7–11, 15,13–21, 15,23–29) concerns the so-called Council of Jerusalem. The main topic of the speeches concerns the acceptance of the Gentiles within the still predominantly Jewish-Christian communities, and without their having to enter the world of Judaism. Although, their acceptance within the New Israel was seen as being the will of God (Ac 10–11), some Jewish Christians demanded that certain obligations of

the Jewish Law were still necessary for the salvation of the Gentiles. The first two speeches in this section give the answer to this doctrinal controversy by strongly underlining the way of grace and faith for the Gentiles, and rejecting their subordination to Jewish Law. The final decision of the Twelve and the elders, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, concentrates not on the doctrinal problems but on the practical problem concerning the conditions under which the Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians can associate within the one Christian community. Luke's main point in this group of speeches is of a sociological nature, and it refers to the Twelve as being the authorities who made the final decision concerning the condition of association between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. The way of grace is given precedence over the way of the Law.

The sixth group of three topical speeches (Ac 22,1–21, 23,1,6, 23,26–30) concerns Paul's visit to Jerusalem after the end of his mission activities, and it refers to the beginning of Paul's imprisonment. The topic of the speeches is the rejection of Paul as a faithful servant of God and a true Jew. Paul's apology, presented in the form of speeches, was not accepted either by the crowd or by the Sanhedrin, resulting in personal attacks on him. Roman citizenship protected him from being lynched and made him a subject of the Roman juridical system, which (in the letter of Lysias) makes a preliminary statement concerning Paul's innocence before the Roman law. This excludes the Romans' supposition that he might be a political agitator opposing the *Pax Romana* (Ac 21,38). In this group of speeches, Luke's main point is to show the strictly religious character of Paul's rejection by the Jews: the crowd's reason for rejection was Paul's claim about his mission to Gentiles; the Sanhedrin's reason was Paul's claim about his faithful service to God. This point will be of special concern in all the following speeches in the narrative concerning Paul's imprisonment.

The seventh group of topical speeches (Ac 24,2–8, 24,10–21, 24,22) concerns the first official trial of Paul in Caesarea, before Felix the procurator of Judea. The topic of the speeches concerns Paul's alleged crimes. The representative of the accusers presents them in his speech, but without any proof, which enables Paul to defend himself swiftly by refuting the allegations as being of a political and social nature. The attention in his speech is diverted to a part of the accusation referring to a religious matter, where the issue of resurrection is presented as being the real reason for this trial. However, though successful, this defence by Paul did not bring him freedom, since the procurator Felix for a different non-judicial reason postponed judgement. The delay in fact lasted for two years. This set of the topical speeches shows the corrupt nature of the local juridical system. Luke's main point, however, concerns the lack of political grounds for the accusation.

The eighth group of topical speeches (Ac 25,8.10–11, 25,14–21, 26,2–29) concerns Paul's second trial in Caesarea, before Festus the new procurator of Judea. The topic of the speeches concerns Paul's appeal to Caesar. The accusation against Paul is presented in a general manner in the narrative (Ac 25,7), and Paul's speech in his defence is reduced to one general statement, because the main aim of Paul's speech is to give the reason for his appealing to Caesar. Paul's appeal forced Festus to seek for sufficient reasons to justify his acceptance of the appeal. For this reason he presents the case of Paul in the speech to the king Agrippa II, in which he, similarly to Lysias, presents Paul's innocence in terms of Roman law, and the religious nature of the case (the question of resurrection of the body) is directly addressed. Paul's defence before the king Agrippa II turns into a proclamation of the kerygma, which reaches its culmination in proclaiming the risen Jesus as the Messiah. Again, faith in the risen Messiah is presented as the only "crime" for which Paul could possibly be accused successfully. For the king and the others this religious matter is not sufficient for imposing the penalty of death or even for imprisonment. Consequently, Paul would be seen to go to Rome as an innocent person. The main point made by Luke in this group of speeches is the lack not only of political but also religious reasons for Paul's imprisonment and his trial at Caesarea, and thus Luke draws attention to the ambivalent disposition of the Roman officials.

The ninth group of topical speeches (Ac 27,10, 27,21–26, 27,33–34) concerns Paul's voyage to Rome. The speech of Paul before king Agrippa II ends the series of speeches related to his imprisonment, and the two last groups of the topical speeches return to presenting Paul as a faithful servant of God. This group of speeches does not contain either socio-political or theological themes. The topic of the speeches during his voyage to Rome concerns Paul's contribution to saving the lives of the co-travellers. By the will of God, the life of Paul will be saved in order to fulfil the task, and as a result the lives of the others will also be saved. Not only Paul's words and actions, but also his presence itself became helpful for saving their lives. Luke's main intention in this group of speeches is to precisely indicate God's will concerning Paul's mission in Rome, since it was hope that upheld Paul's strength to encourage his companions on the journey, without whom his own survival would not have been possible.

The tenth group of speeches (Ac 28,17–20, 28,21–22, 28,25–28) concerns the beginning of Paul's stay in Rome. The topic of the speeches is the relation between Paul and the Jewish community in Rome. In the first speech he gives an apology concerning his case, which contains three important statements: Paul has committed no crime either against the Jewish Law or the Roman law; Paul was rejected by the Jews in Jerusalem; the reason for that rejection was

hope concerning the Messiah. Paul appealed to Caesar in order to save his life, and not in order to accuse the whole nation. In the second speech the Jews in Rome show a lack of interest in Paul's problem with the Jews in Jerusalem, but they were particularly suspicious about the sect to which he belonged. This suspicion gave him the opportunity to proclaim the kerygma also to the Jews in Rome, which they accepted in part, but also rejected in part. The Jews' reaction to Paul's kerygma resulted in his second speech, in which he speaks of the mission to Gentiles. These are in fact Paul's last words in Acts and they point to the general characteristic of Paul mission to Jews who rejected him, and to Gentiles who accepted him. Luke had repeatedly underlined this in his narrative concerning Paul's missionary work. The main point of this group of speeches concerns the relation between Paul and the Jews living in Rome. This was strongly influenced not by Paul's relation with the authorities in Jerusalem but rather by his teaching to the Jews in Rome.

The second major group of speeches contains structural speeches, which play an important function in the narrative of Acts, although they do not possess any topic developed in other related speeches. The function of all the structural speeches is not the same, since in some cases they function as preparation (Ac 1,16–22, 6,2–4, 14,15–17, 25,24–27); or for clarifying (Ac 18,14–15, 19,25–27, 19,35–40, 21,20–25). There are two exceptions: one speech acts as a division in the narrative (Ac 4,24–30), and another speech functions as a form of manifesto (Ac 1,4–8).

The first structural speech that appears in Acts is the speech of Jesus (Ac 1,4–8). Although it takes two functions, only the second one is related to the Acts, since the first function is to connect the Gospel of Luke with the Acts of the Apostles. The second function is a manifesto. Jesus ordered the apostles to stay in Jerusalem until they would be strengthened with the gift of the Holy Spirit, which would enable them to proclaim the kerygma, first in Jerusalem, then in Judea and Samaria, and finally to the ends of the earth. This manifesto exposes the two most important themes in Acts, where the first concerns the Holy Spirit as the main agent of every single action undertaken by Jesus' followers, whether they act as individuals or as a community. The second theme concerns that which is most fundamental for Christian identity—the fulfilment of Jesus' order to proclaim the Gospel. These two themes run side-by-side throughout Acts and thus this speech functions as a presentation of the whole writing.

The second structural speech is given by Peter before the election of the replacement for Judas (Ac 1,16–22). The concept of the New Israel was built on the example of Israel, in which the twelve sons of Jacob became the foundation

of the nation. Before the pillars of the New Israel will be filled with the Holy Spirit, the number of the Twelve must be complete, since the similarity and continuity between Israel and the New Israel must remain unchanged. After the death of Judas, leaving only eleven apostles, the others had to choose a replacement to concur with Jewish tradition. The speech, on the one hand, holds an explanatory function of indicating the way in which Judas was replaced, and on the other hand, in the narrative of Acts it holds a preparatory function, since it precedes the account concerning the event of Pentecost. As the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot) commemorates the day Moses received the Torah, the event by which Israel became the nation committed to God's service, similarly the event of the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Twelve was the fulfilment of the God's promises and the act of inauguration of the New Israel who will serve God by faith in Jesus.

The third structural speech takes the form of a community prayer (Ac 4,24–30), and is placed in the narrative concerning the mission in Jerusalem, which contains two groups of topical speeches. The placement of this structural speech between these two groups of the topical speech shows the function of the speech. The first group of topical speeches concerns the kerygma proclaimed in Jerusalem, which led to the conflict with the authorities, and the second group of topical speeches concerns the conflict between the Twelve and the Sanhedrin, which led to persecution of Jesus' followers. The structural speech divides the narrative concerning the period in Jerusalem into two parts: the time for proclaiming the kerygma, and the time of the conflict. The speech acts as a division in a narrative set in one place but relating to different stages. The structural speech contains the prayer for the strength to give witness to Jesus even in time of conflict, indicating their awareness that conflict was approaching, and also their steadfast intention to give the witness to the name of Jesus.

The fourth structural speech is given by Peter during the election of the Seven (Ac 6,2–4). The speech contains Peter's solution to the small conflict that developed within the community in Jerusalem, which forced the Twelve to develop the structure of Jewish Christian group in order to facilitate the functionality of the system of charity. The decision made by Peter in this speech was the basis for establishing the Seven, who would take care of the material needs of the community. Because Stephen, who features in the following narrative, is among the chosen Seven, the speech has a preparatory function by providing the reader with an explanation of the legal status of the group and its aims. The account concerning Stephen shows that his activities as recorded by Luke (Ac 6,8–10) went beyond his duty as the one of the Seven. Stephen was a man

of good reputation, wise and filled with the Holy Spirit, which enabled him to give the witness even at the cost of his life (Ac 7,2–60).

The fifth structural speech is given by Paul during his first mission journey in Lystra, and is addressed to Gentiles, whose attempt to deify Paul and Barnabas was firmly opposed (Ac 14,15–17). The speech begins with a rejection of the divine origin of the speaker. This is reduced to a single statement, and in his speech Paul immediately proceeds to proclaim the only God, the creator of the whole universe. The speech seems rather to introduce the topic than develop it, and is based on argumentation suited to an agriculture society and folk piety. Although half of the speech contains topics similar to those found in the Paul's speech on the Areopagus, their presentation and level of development differs in both speeches. This shows the function of the speech to be preparatory, since it contains an example of Paul's preaching to Gentiles in the countryside, before the main speech to Gentiles given by him in the cradle of Greek philosophy and centre of Hellenistic cults will be presented in Luke's narrative. The narrative concerning the first mission journey and the second mission journey is interrupted by the account concerning the Jerusalem council. In this context, the structural speech indicates the topic of the main speech (the speech at the Areopagus) in a narrative concerning the mission to Gentiles.

The sixth structural speech is given by Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia (Ac 18,14–15), and it contains his refusal to pass judgment on matters relating to Jewish religious controversy. Corinth became Paul's final and main stop during the second mission journey, where he spent eighteen months and achieved major missionary success. Despite the brevity of the narrative concerning this stage of Paul's mission, Luke indicates twice that Paul met with strong Jewish opposition in this city (Ac 18,6,12). The only speech in the narrative concerning the mission in Corinth explains the reason for Paul's long stay in the city despite coordinated opposition. For this reason, the speech holds an explanatory function, presenting the Roman official as following the general rule of conduct in cases concerning Jewish religious issues. By doing so Gallio was in fact acting for the benefit of Paul's mission in the city (Ac 18,18).

The seventh structural speech is given by Demetrius, the craftsman from Ephesus, who caused disturbance in the city because Paul's activities in the region had an adverse effect on his trade (Ac 19,25–27). Although Demetrius used religious arguments in his speech to spread his propaganda among the crowd, the real reason for his action is indicated by himself and it derives from socio-economic interest. Since the speech caused a riot, which forced Paul to end the mission in Ephesus, it holds a clarifying function in the narrative, because it

presents the Gentiles' economic interest as the reason because of which Paul was unable to continue his mission. It is worth noting that, after indicating that folk piety (in the first mission journey), and philosophical reasoning (in the second mission journey), economic interest (in the third mission journey) is also added among the main obstacles to the mission to Gentiles.

The eighth structural speech is given by the town clerk of Ephesus in order to calm the disturbances caused by Demetrius' speech (Ac 19,35–40). Although the place and time are the same, the topics of the Demetrius' speeches and the town clerk are different. The main concern of the town clerk's speech refers to the illegal character of the gathering, which could have severe consequences for the whole town. He also indicates the legal way to solve the problem that should be followed by Demetrius and his supporters. This indicates that the administration of Ephesus did not allow the crowd to take any spontaneous action against Paul and his co-workers, since the reason for Demetrius' action was based on private economic interest, used to raise religiously motivated intolerance. The speech holds an explanatory function in the narrative, because it shows that the Roman juridical system in the Hellenistic world worked to the benefit of the Christian missionaries, protecting them from persecution by particular social groups. The town clerk is the second Roman official from a Hellenistic town, after Gallio in Corinth, who *de facto* acted in Paul's favour by following the Roman juridical system's principles. Their behaviour contrasts fundamentally with that of the two Roman officials who will judge Paul's case in Judea.

The ninth structural speech is given by James and the elders of the Jerusalem community to Paul shortly after his arrival in Jerusalem (Ac 21,20–25). The elders were aware of the controversy within the community concerning the Paul's mission and the potential problems that might arise as a result of his presence in the city. They strongly advise that he participate in the ritual of purification in order to dispel as ungrounded any suspicions in his regard. It is most probable that Paul's participation in the rituals calmed any suspicions about him within the group of the believers, but at the same time it exposed Paul to strong accusation from the side of the Diaspora Jews who were not followers of Jesus. The speech clarifies that the intention of the Jerusalem community was to protect Paul and secure his stay in the city as far as was in their power, however, this was limited to the relations within Jewish Christian community. Indirectly, this explanatory speech indicates that Paul's opponents within the Jerusalem community did not take part in the action against him in the Temple.

The tenth structural speech is the second speech of Festus (Ac 25,24–27) given before the king Agrippa II and the leading citizens of Caesarea. It is

placed almost at the end of the narrative concerning Paul's trials before the procurators of Judea. Paul has appealed to Caesar, thus closing his case before the local judicial system represented by procurator Festus. However, Paul's appeal made it necessary for Festus to write a report concerning Paul's case, in which he should include sufficient reasons for sending the prisoner to Rome. Festus, who found Paul guilty of no crime against Rome, sought the help of Herod Agrippa II in the hope that the king would find some issue of a religious nature that would justify his acceptance of Paul's appeal. Before Paul addressed Herod, Festus introduced Paul's case to the king (for the second time) and the foremost citizens of Caesarea (for the first time). His speech has a preparatory function, since it precedes directly and introduces Paul's speech before the king. However, it also shows Festus' true reason for arranging this kind of Paul's interrogation before Herod Agrippa II, which was in fact unnecessary from a legal point of view.

Separation of the speeches from the narrative in Acts has shown that the speeches in general are not necessary to the coherent historical and chronological account given in the book. However, the text of Acts *excluding* the speeches, as presented in Chapter 1 of this study, often differs significantly from the text of Acts *including* the speeches. In fact the result would amount to two different books, not only in content, but also in meaning and purpose. The speeches are a device, which changes the interpretation of the narrative and gives it, in some cases, a different dimension. The speeches contribute to the narrative particularly in the following four categories: they present the content of the kerygma (Ac 2,14–40, 3,12–26, 4,8–12.19–20, 5,29–32, 7,2–60, 10,28–29.34–43.47, 13,16–41.46–47, 14,15–17, 17,22–31); they are intended to convince (Ac 1,16–22, 4,24–30, 5,35–39, 15,7–11, 15,13–21, 19,25–27, 21,20–25, 24,2–8, 27,10, 27,21–26, 27,33–34, 28,25–28); their aim is to defend (Ac 11,5–17, 22,1–21, 23,1.6, 24,10–21, 26,2–29, 28,17–20); and they are used for instruction (Ac 1,4–8, 6,2–4, 8,20–23, 15,23–29, 18,14–15, 19,35–40, 20,18–35, 23,26–30, 24,22, 25,8.10–11, 25,14–21, 25,24–27, 28,21–22).

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